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ABSTRACT

This guidebook provides a framework for planning schoolwide improvements. It is intended to help educators redesign schools, move beyond piecemeal reforms, and reconfigure entire academic programs to help every student meet challenging standards. The guidebook describes the context of comprehensive school reform and offers a process for conducting comprehensive data analysis, planning, and implementation. It includes tools and activities to facilitate planning and implementation, profiles of successful schools, and lists of additional resources. The first of nine sections offers an introduction and the purpose of the guide, which is followed by a discussion of the context of comprehensive school reform. The next five sections discuss the key elements of comprehensive school reform and include an explication of a demonstration program; notes on how to build a solid foundation for schoolwide reform; advice on gathering information and then planning, implementing, and sustaining comprehensive schoolwide reform; and a list of tools and activities needed for reform efforts. The document includes seven profiles of successful schools and lists various resources that can be used to aid the reform effort. Two videotapes that provide an overview of comprehensive school reform and document visits to several schools as they implemented reform efforts are included. (RJM)

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Comprehensive School Reform

Research-based Strategies to Achieve High Standards

ED 448 505

A Guidebook on School-wide Improvement

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The agency was created in 1995 to unite and enhance the capacity of Far West Laboratory and Southwest Regional Laboratory, two of the nation's original education laboratories created by Congress in 1966. In addition to our work across the nation, WestEd serves as the regional education laboratory for Arizona, California, Nevada and Utah. The organization is headquartered in San Francisco, with additional offices in Arizona, Massachusetts, Washington, D.C. and elsewhere in California.

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Introduction and Purpose

At a time of unprecedented economic prosperity and confidence in the future, education is often mentioned in public opinion polls as the issue of greatest concern to Americans today. New jobs are demanding an increasingly skilled and knowledgeable work force. People in the United States want and expect more of their schools, particularly the schools that are having the most difficulty meeting students' needs. Usually located in low-income communities, these are schools where students are doing poorly and where there has been little hope for positive change.

Yet in recent years, a promising trend has emerged to counter the common conception of low-achieving schools as being caught in an endless downward spiral. With support and assistance from the federal, state, and district levels, schools throughout the country are finding effective ways to restructure the way they operate, drawing on research about what works. They are beginning to experience significant success not just in terms of improving student achievement but also in developing a spirit of teamwork and cooperation among teachers, administrators, parents, and the broader school-community.

A Comprehensive Approach to Improving Schools and Raising Student Achievement

Central to the successes many schools have begun to experience is the concept of comprehensive, school-wide reform. It is a concept derived from many years of research on school reform indicating that schools are more successful when they focus on improvement of the entire school and address all key aspects of the school program. Comprehensive school reform is contrasted with short-term, piecemeal reforms that introduce isolated programs with little follow-up or sustained support. In cases where comprehensive reform has been based on the adoption of a specific model or design for school reform, another finding is particularly significant: a school's success depends on how faithfully the staff implements the model.

A primary focus of this guide is on the U.S. Department of Education's Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program (CSRD). CSRD is designed, in part, to build on and strengthen schoolwide programs under the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA). Both CSRD and schoolwide programs are designed to support comprehensive school improvement strategies in a coordinated fashion to help students reach challenging standards. However, CSRD places a special emphasis on working with expert partners to implement school reform models that have a strong research base and a successful replication record. Other key elements of the CSRD program include:

- ✓ Conducting a comprehensive, ***data-based needs assessment***, examining data both on student achievement and other features of the school;

- ***Matching*** the needs of the school with research-based school reform approaches that ***have evidence of effectiveness*** in raising student achievement;
- ***Reallocating resources*** (including money, staff, and time) to support reform efforts and sustain them over the long term; and
- Using evaluation as a tool for ***continuous improvement***, focusing on both implementation and student results.

We have designed this guide to help schools with successful implementation of comprehensive, school-wide reform, including participants in the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program, as well as other schools undertaking entire-school improvement using federal, state, and local funds. The guide can be helpful wherever schools are considering ways to address low student achievement through a sustained effort of the entire school staff, parents, and the community. The guide offers step-by-step explanations of school reform processes and approaches that will enable you and your staff to take into account the learning needs of every student at your school. It also provides information about a variety of resources ranging from practical tools, included in the guide itself, to additional resources that can help to make school-wide reform a reality at your school and a successful experience for everyone involved.

It Starts with You

The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program offers start-up funding and a framework to assist schools that are pursuing school-wide reform. Within this framework, however, individual schools have considerable latitude in developing and implementing a plan for effective change based on their assessment of the unique needs of their students, staff members, and communities, and using coherent research-based strategies to address those needs.

The CSRD program is not a "top down" initiative that tells schools what they should be doing in order to become more effective. Rather, the program acknowledges the central role that school professionals, parent leaders, and the community can and must play in turning a school around.

The program encourages all participants to share a common vision for their reform efforts that:

- ***focuses on clear academic goals and high expectations*** for all students. The goal is more than just the development of a plan. The purpose is to improve learning.
- ***bases reform efforts on data***—meaningful information gathered about student achievement and other important stakeholders' concerns. Data gathered as part of a comprehensive reform process can identify both strengths and needs.
- ***emphasizes classroom teaching and learning***. Schools that are less successful in their attempts at school-wide reform are often all over the map, implementing elements in bits and pieces. They add after-school programs, involve parents in new ways, or change discipline policies (all of which may be quite valuable as part of a larger effort). But they lack a focus on a key factor in student achievement: the everyday world of the classroom.
- ***improves teaching through professional development*** and

other forms of support to teachers and other school staff. Successful school reform efforts give teachers the structures and resources that will help them to succeed. In effective schools, professional development is not a series of isolated events; it is part of a culture of learning in the school.

- ***accepts no excuses***. Successful schools assume that all children can attain high levels of academic achievement. In successful schools, blaming the family or the community is unacceptable.

Purpose of the Guide

This guide was developed to provide a coherent framework for planning school-wide improvements. Its purpose is to help you begin to redesign your school, to move beyond piecemeal reforms, and to reconfigure your entire academic program to help every student meet challenging standards. Specifically, it is designed to:

- Help you understand the purpose, scope, and intent of CSRD as well as how it relates to IASA schoolwide programs;
- Offer a planning framework that your school-community can use to develop comprehensive reform efforts;
- Provide a broad range of examples of how innovative schools are implementing their reform efforts;
- Present ideas and information about the latest research to support the development of effective school-wide reform strategies; and
- Point the way towards numerous helpful resources.

Even if you and your school are not yet involved in comprehensive school reform, this guide can be helpful because it presents a broad view of reform efforts within the context of the CSRD program. If your school has already undertaken school-wide reform, the guide can help you do an even better job.

Wherever you are in the reform process, comprehensive school reform requires a major commitment of time and resources. Support from your school district and experts who are familiar with the process of school-wide reform will be essential to your success.

How the Guide is Organized

The guide is divided into several sections, each of which is separated by a tab, allowing for inclusion of additional notes, resources or materials.

The Context for Comprehensive School Reform describes the powerful potential for comprehensive school reform to improve academic achievement for diverse learners. This section introduces the elements of a comprehensive reform effort under CSRD and discusses the relationship of the CSRD program with other school-wide reform initiatives, particularly the schoolwide program (SWP) component of Title I of the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA).

Key Elements of the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program offers more detailed information about the CSRD framework and the program's nine major components.

Building a Solid Foundation for School-wide Reform introduces the basic elements that must be in place for

comprehensive reform to succeed. These include building a team, involving key stakeholders, and establishing a common vision for school improvement.

Getting Results I: Gathering Information for Informed Decisions focuses on key steps in gathering and using data for comprehensive reform: data-driven needs assessment and decision-making.

Getting Results II: Planning, Implementing and Sustaining Comprehensive School-wide Reform incorporates three major elements: designing a comprehensive program; developing an action plan; and implementing, evaluating, and revising the plan.

Tools and Activities contains planning forms and worksheets to support comprehensive school reform planning, implementation, and evaluation. All the materials in this section are linked with specific steps and procedures in the preceding sections.

Profiles of Successful Schools describes selected schools that have demonstrated success in implementing comprehensive reform models and approaches.

Resources offers additional support documentation and materials that can be helpful in planning and carrying out comprehensive school reform.

Two videos accompany the guidebook. The first provides an overview of the CSRD program. The second video highlights comprehensive reform implementation in several schools across the country. The guide is also available at: www.wested.org/csrd/guidebook

As much as possible, the design of the guide is similar to that of a web site. When relevant, links in the form of special text boxes prompt you to examine other resources, tools, or take special note. Please note however, that while much information is contained in this guide, some of these links may require you to obtain a resource or additional information from another source such as the Internet. There are three types of text boxes:

TOOLS AND ACTIVITIES

REFERENCES TO RESOURCES

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The purpose of this design is to make the guide as user-friendly and practical as possible. We hope you will make this guide your own "work in progress" by including notes and ideas as you proceed in planning and implementing a school-wide approach to positive change. The guide is based on the experiences and successes of many diverse school-communities. Use it, share it with others, incorporate your own ideas and your own vision for your school, make a commitment to meaningful school-wide change, and you can be part of that success.

Acronyms used in this guidebook:

- CSRD – Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program
- ESEA – Elementary and Secondary Education Act
- IASA – Improving America's Schools Act of 1994
- LEA – Local Education Agency
- SEA – State Education Agency
- SWP – Schoolwide Program

The Context for Comprehensive School Reform

In the current national discussion of how to improve low-achieving schools and help all students to meet high educational standards, a key assumption has been that teachers and parents must raise their expectations and act on the belief that all students can succeed, regardless of their family background or socioeconomic status. This belief is fundamentally important, but it alone is not enough to make improved student achievement a reality, especially in schools where achievement levels have been low for many years or even decades. The challenge to these schools is to use proven approaches to translate the belief that all students can succeed into upgraded structures and support systems and improved teaching and learning.

Although many school improvement strategies have been tried with only moderate success, one idea that has gained growing attention and support is that improvements in student achievement occur most frequently when there is an all-out effort to make positive, academically focused school-wide changes on behalf of all students. A recent study, *Special Strategies for Educating Disadvantaged Students* (April 1997), noted that "Students in schools working with whole-school reform tended to achieve greater gains than did students in schools attempting various pull-out programs." In communities such as Memphis, schools are beginning to get results from using comprehensive approaches to school improvement.

See *Profiles* section for descriptions of successful schools.

In addition, a growing body of evidence suggests that working with externally developed school reform models can be a powerful catalyst for improvement when integrated into a school's overall school reform plan. (*Special Strategies*, 1997) Rarely do school personnel have the time or opportunity to develop and research new approaches to school change, especially approaches that strengthen the entire school. Program developers based in universities or independent research and development organizations, working closely with schools and districts can refine new approaches to school reform and conceptualize reform models. When provided with the appropriate resources and support, schools can often derive strength from working closely with external, reform-focused organizations. The benefits of comprehensive reform can only be realized, however, when districts and schools actually implement the approach they have selected. Even promising school reform designs are likely to fail if "they are implemented one element at a time" (Ross, March 1998) rather than in a more comprehensive fashion.

The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program

The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program (CSRD), established through the leadership of Congressmen David Obey of Wisconsin and John Porter of Illinois, is a school-wide reform initiative administered by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE). CSRD is based on what has been learned in recent years about effective school reform models and approaches. Approximately $145 million was appropriated nationwide for each of the program's first two years, 1998 and 1999, $120 million of which comes from Title I (Demonstrations of Innovative Practices), and $25 million from Title X (Fund for the Improvement of Education). Formula grants are provided to state education agencies (SEAs), which then make competitive awards to local educational agencies (LEAs) applying on behalf of individual schools.

The legislation establishing the CSRD Program is contained in the U.S. Congress Conference Report (P.L. 105-78,H. Rept. 105-390). For more information e-mail: compreform@ed.gov or visit: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/compreform
Also refer to the first video for an overview of the legislation.

CSRD's purpose, according to the USDE, is to "provide financial incentives for schools that need to substantially improve student achievement, particularly Title I schools, to implement comprehensive school reform programs that are based on reliable research and effective practices, and that include an emphasis on basic academics and parental involvement." Toward this end, CSRD requires all participating schools to include nine major components (which build on the requirements of schoolwide programs under Title I). The nine components are:

1. ***Innovative strategies and proven methods*** for student learning, teaching, and school management that are based on reliable research and effective practices, and have been replicated successfully in schools with diverse characteristics;
2. A ***comprehensive design*** for effective school functioning that (a) aligns the school's curriculum, technology, and professional development into a school-wide reform plan designed to enable all students to meet challenging state content and performance standards and (b) addresses needs identified through a school needs assessment;
3. High-quality and continuous teacher and staff ***professional development*** and training;
4. ***Measurable goals*** for student performance and ***benchmarks*** for meeting those goals;
5. ***Support*** by school faculty, administrators, and staff;

6. The meaningful ***involvement of parents and the local community*** in planning and implementing school improvement activities;
7. ***High-quality external technical support*** and assistance from a comprehensive school reform entity (e.g., a university or independent research organization) with experience or expertise in school-wide reform and improvement;
8. A plan for the ***evaluation*** of the implementation of school reforms and the student results achieved; and
9. Identification of how other ***resources*** (Federal, State, local, and private) available to the school will be utilized and coordinated to support and sustain the school reform effort.

These components are discussed in more detail in the section, *Key Elements of the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program.*

CSRD and Standards-based Education

By supporting comprehensive school reform, the CSRD program is designed to enable all children, particularly low-achieving children, to meet challenging state standards. Thus, CSRD is aligned with the growing movement throughout the country toward higher academic standards and greater school accountability for student learning.

To a great extent, standards-based education has been the engine of current school reform. Increasingly, the development of content standards (descriptions of what children should know and be able to do) has contributed to improved curricula, instructional strategies, and assessment systems. Clearly, however, standards-based reform must be buttressed by strong, coherent policy and governance systems, including meaningful efforts to support classroom teachers in addressing the needs of all students.

Helping students who have not experienced a great deal of academic success to meet the new standards is a significant challenge. It requires attention to a variety of issues that have not been adequately addressed by many schools as they have re-oriented their curriculum and instructional approaches. These include:

- ***Equity.*** New structures and strategies are particularly important in schools where significant numbers of children have special needs, have limited English language proficiency, or live in poverty.
- ***Improving instruction.*** The need to focus on improving instruction, including effective professional development approaches, is often overlooked. As one study noted, "The current system of professional development is weak, fragmented, and often disconnected from proposed reforms" *(Public Policy and School Reform—A Research Summary,* 1995).
- ***Parental and community involvement.*** The success of standards-based reform may

depend on educators' and policy makers' ability to engage the public, parents, and communities; yet this is invariably one of the most difficult goals to achieve, particularly in hard-pressed, low-income communities.

Measuring progress. Development of performance standards aligned with assessment and accountability systems and long-term plans for assessing student progress has lagged far behind the development of content standards.

The intent of the CSRD program is to address the challenges of school-wide reform by capitalizing on research-based reform models that many schools have successfully implemented in a variety of settings across the country. These models often include strategies to accommodate issues of equity or focus intensely on improved instruction and the school's professional development needs. In many cases, they include developing a standards-based accountability system that allows a school to measure progress and support continuous improvement. Other models include strong approaches to involving parents and the community.

In addition, the CSRD program recognizes the importance and value of locally developed programs that integrate, in a coherent manner, the components of a school-wide program and that have research-based evidence of effectiveness. The program's overarching goal is to support schools undertaking comprehensive reforms that show the most promise for successful implementation and helping students reach high standards.

The Link with Schoolwide Programs under the Improving America's Schools Act

CSRD is intended to stimulate school-wide change covering virtually all aspects of a school's operations. In this respect, CSRD is similar to the schoolwide program (SWP) component of the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), with which CSRD is closely linked.

For more information about IASA visit: http://www.ed.gov/legislation/ESEA
For guidance on schoolwide programs visit: http://www.ed.gov/legislation/ESEA/Title_I/swpguide.html

If a school has been planning a schoolwide program under IASA or another major reform initiative, the CSRD program and funds can be a catalyst for action. CSRD offers additional incentive and structure for schools that agree to work with an external partner to undertake research-based improvements.

The core purpose of IASA when it was enacted in 1994 was to help provide better schooling for impoverished children. Title I of IASA (reauthorizing Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, or ESEA) embraced a framework for change that revolved around high standards, challenging academic content, comprehensive planning, continuous professional development, flexibility to draw on all resources to support improvement, and clear accountability for results. The centerpiece of this redirected Title I is

schoolwide programs, an option that gives participating schools (with 50% or more students in poverty) the flexibility to use all resources available to the school, including Title I, to upgrade the school's entire educational program, not just provide targeted additional services.

The schoolwide program option grew out of research about what makes schools successful for disadvantaged students. Studies repeatedly found that principals and teachers in highly effective schools developed a building-wide focus.

While the number of schools operating schoolwide programs has grown rapidly during the 1990s, relatively few schools within Title I have taken full advantage of this new flexibility. Many schools that did implement the schoolwide approach did not undertake fundamental instructional reforms. Rather, they focused on incremental and administrative changes. Schools' staff members were unsure of how a schoolwide approach would work, and skepticism prevailed. Schools were fearful of being out of compliance if they moved away from traditional pull-out or in-class models. Yet, research continued to show that when the entire school is the target of change, schools serving the most disadvantaged children could achieve remarkable success.

For a resource on planning schoolwide programs see *Schoolwide Reform: A New Outlook*, WestEd, 1997. For more information visit: http://www.wested.org/cc/html/resource_guide.htm
Also see *Implementing Schoolwide Programs: An Idea Book on Planning*, USDE, 1998. Available at: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/Idea_planning

Today, Title I schools taking the schoolwide option have considerable latitude in planning and program design. Nevertheless, they are expected to address several specific requirements associated with the design and implementation of a sound plan. A schoolwide program must include the following specific components, which are similar but distinct from the nine components of CSRD:

- A comprehensive needs assessment of all children in the school based on their performance;
- Involvement of the school community and individuals who will carry out the plan;
- Development of school-wide reform strategies;
- Measures to ensure that instruction is provided by highly qualified professional staff;
- Increased parent involvement;
- Transitions for preschool children from early childhood programs to local elementary programs;
- Inclusion of teachers in decisions regarding development and use of assessments;
- Effective and timely activities to provide assistance to students who experience difficulty mastering any standard; and
- A description of how the school's assessment system will provide individual student assessment results, produce statistically sound conclusions, and report data to the public.

There are important parallels between CSRD and SWP. As authorized in 1994, IASA provides a new opportunity to address school-wide reform that extends flexibility and is coupled with

accountability for results. CSRD takes this a step further, placing even greater emphasis on programs with a track record of raising student achievement. CSRD increases the interest, awareness, and value of research-based programs and models, particularly those with successes in high-poverty schools.

See *Side-by-Side Comparison of the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program and Title I Schoolwide Program*, in the *Resources* section of this guide.

Recently, the Department of Education announced its proposal for reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This proposal would continue the focus on strengthening schoolwide programs established in 1994, featuring a comprehensive needs assessment, a coherent design to improve teaching and learning throughout the entire school, and a regular review of the school's progress in implementing improvements and meeting goals for student achievement. In particular, in the reauthorization proposal, schoolwide programs would use effective research-based methods and strategies to strengthen the core academic program of the school and increase the amount and quality of learning time.

For more information on the Department's ESEA reauthorization proposal, visit: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/ESEA/index.html

Key Elements of the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program

The Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program (CSRD) was designed to support schools undertaking comprehensive reforms that show the most promise for successful implementation and helping students reach high standards. Through a competitive application process, States award $50,000 per year for three years to schools, particularly IASA Title I schools that need to substantially improve student achievement. Participating schools implement comprehensive school reform efforts based on reliable research and effective practices that include an emphasis on the core academic program and family involvement.

See *Profiles* section for descriptions of successful schools.

The CSRD funding is a catalyst for change, but it was not designed to be the primary ingredient of effective school-wide reform. Many schools throughout the country have developed comprehensive reform efforts incorporating principles similar to those of the CSRD program without additional funding. Although funding can help to jump-start comprehensive reform in a school, more important is a long-term commitment on the part of the administration, staff, and community.

Central Themes

The CSRD program incorporates several key ideas and premises about effective school reform. These include:

Comprehensive, school-wide improvements. CSRD is based on the awareness that schools across the country are experiencing significant success with comprehensive models for school-wide change covering virtually all aspects of school operations, rather than a piecemeal, fragmented approach.

Effective research-based reform models. CSRD encourages schools to examine successful, externally developed models for inclusion in their comprehensive plan for reform. Such models are to have well-researched, well-documented designs for school-wide change that have been successfully replicated in multiple schools. Locally

developed programs with research-based evidence of effectiveness are also eligible. CSRD's enabling legislation notes that "[w]hile no single school improvement plan can be best for every school..., schools should be encouraged to examine successful, externally-developed comprehensive school reform approaches that can be adapted in their own communities."

The CSRD legislation specifically cites 17 widely available program models as possible examples that schools may wish to consider in developing their comprehensive reform efforts: Accelerated Schools, ATLAS Communities, Audrey Cohen College, the Coalition of Essential Schools, Community for Learning, Co-NECT, Direct Instruction, Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound, High Schools That Work, the Modern Red Schoolhouse, the National Alliance for Restructuring Education, Paideia, Roots and Wings, the School Development Program, Success for All, the Talent Development High School, and the Urban Learning Center. See the *Resources* section of this guide for further information on these and other research-based models.

Targeting schools that need to substantially raise student achievement. The legislation encourages States to use CSRD and Title I funds to support improvements in schools that have been identified, on the basis of low student achievement, as needing improvement under Title I. In addition, States may consider other indicators of need, such as schools with high dropout rates or their feeder schools.

THE NINE CSRD PROGRAM COMPONENTS

CSRD includes nine program components that research has shown to be important in successful efforts to improve achievement for all children. The interrelation of the components in a coherent design—contrasted with a fragmented, piecemeal approach that brings together an array of individual, unrelated models or strategies—is critically important in the CSRD program.

1. EFFECTIVE, RESEARCH-BASED METHODS AND STRATEGIES

To qualify for comprehensive reform, a school must employ innovative strategies based on reliable research, effective practices, and proven methods to improve student learning, teaching, and school management. Such strategies must also have been replicated successfully in schools with diverse characteristics. Effective research-based models provide evidence in four dimensions:

- **Theoretical or research foundation for the program.** The theory or research findings explain how both a comprehensive model and its practices produce gains in student performance.
- **Evaluation data showing improvements in student achievement.** Evidence of educationally significant improvement in major subject areas is shown through reliable measures of student achievement before and after implementation of the model.
- **Effective implementation.** Adequate information describes how to make the model fully operational.
- **Replicability.** The model proves that it can be successfully replicated in other schools.

Ideally, effective evidence would demonstrate that a theory-based model was evaluated using thorough and

professional classic control-group techniques. Because such data are not usually available, the quality of the evidence for each dimension is likely to vary by program and within a program. For example, a program might be based on a strong theory and be able to provide evidence that it improves outcomes, yet have weak evidence of replicability in other schools.

See *Determining Effectiveness* in the *Resources* section of this guide for several examples of how schools can consider evidence of effectiveness.

The CSRD legislation highlights 17 models as examples only; a school may develop its own comprehensive school reform program based on rigorous research that coherently integrates the nine required components. A subsequent section of this guide, *Getting Results II: Planning, Implementing and Sustaining Comprehensive School-wide Reform,* provides details on how to determine effectiveness and choose a research-based model.

2 Comprehensive Design with Aligned Components

A comprehensive design aligns the school's curriculum, technology, and professional development with a school-wide reform plan that enables all students—including those from low-income families, with limited English proficiency, and with disabilities or special learning needs—to meet challenging state content and performance standards and to address gaps identified through a needs assessment. To be eligible for participation in CSRD, the school's reform design must address all components of effective schooling: curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional development, parental involvement, and school and classroom management.

A crucial element in this component is the needs assessment. Without it, there can be no data to determine which steps to take in improving student achievement. Decisions cannot be based on hunches, gut feelings, or nebulous assumptions. A needs assessment that is carried out in an open, honest manner may uncover inconsistencies or problems in the school's curriculum and instructional practices. Needs assessments often point to areas of weakness not even considered before that can be adjusted with little effort. The process also leads people to use data carefully to make well-grounded decisions about needed changes in a school if all children are to succeed, while establishing a framework for continuous improvement. How to carry out an effective needs assessment is covered more fully in *Getting Results I: Gathering Information for Informed Decisions.*

3 Professional Development

High-quality continuous teacher and staff professional development and training are critical to school-wide reform. In order to engage in professional development activities that will make a real and lasting difference, however, most schools will need to redefine what they mean by the term. The primary goal of professional development should be to bring about significant improvements in the school's day-to-day instructional practices and school climate. Effective professional development activities

create new expectations and ways of interacting among teachers, administrators, and other school staff. Opportunities for quality professional development include study groups, grade-level and cross-grade-level collaboration, peer teacher observation, and ongoing feedback through coaching and modeling instructional strategies. To make these and other activities meaningful, it is essential to create a long-range plan for professional development that aligns with the school's broader comprehensive reform program and that provides follow-up and expert assistance to help teachers apply new skills and knowledge in the classroom.

Typically, schools allocate relatively little time to professional development activities, and, therefore, teachers and other staff are limited to participation in occasional workshops that offer minimal follow-up or none at all. A major commitment of time and resources is needed in order to give teachers and other school staff the opportunity to participate in ongoing professional development, both at the school and off site. In addition to building an effective school-wide team, high-quality professional development is the key to creating an understanding of and consensus around research-based instructional approaches that reach all students and are aligned to challenging standards.

The US Department of Education has developed a set of principles for high-quality professional development. To view them, visit: http://www.ed.gov/G2K/bridge.html

4. MEASURABLE GOALS AND BENCHMARKS

A successful comprehensive reform effort includes clearly stated goals for improved student performance tied to challenging content and performance standards, all with clearly identifiable and measurable benchmarks. The goals should grow out of a thorough needs assessment, part of a larger accountability system with multiple measures, and the goals and benchmarks should support the school's comprehensive reform plan. Identifying goals and benchmarks is one facet, and perhaps the most important, of an overall approach to data gathering and analysis that plays a key role in school improvement. Key examples might include:

- ✓ Student performance on standardized achievement tests;
- ✓ Student performance on other tests and measures aligned with State

At their best, standards and assessments are more than just the necessary first step toward improved student learning. Properly done, they actually help parents, teachers, and community members enable students—as well as help students enable themselves—to achieve at much higher levels. Standards set clear, visible targets for performance and provide models of what good performance looks like.

—Robert Rothman, "How to make the link between standards, assessments, and real student achievement." Getting Better By Design.(Arlington, VA): New American Schools, [1998]

standards in the core curriculum areas;

- ✓ The school's "report card" rankings in district or state testing programs, if applicable; and
- ✓ The extent to which curriculum, instruction, and instructional resources at the school are aligned with district and State curriculum standards.

In addition to identifying areas of critical need, all of these data can serve as a basis for comparison in future years as the school pursues a long-term, comprehensive plan for reform and change. At regular intervals, data should be gathered on student achievement in relation to identified academic and performance standards and specific benchmarks. This topic is covered more fully in *Getting Results II: Planning, Implementing and Sustaining Comprehensive School-wide Reform.*

5. SUPPORT WITHIN THE SCHOOL

To be successful, a comprehensive reform program must have the strong support of the school faculty, administrators, and staff. Everyone in the school needs to buy in to the effort. This contrasts with more traditional, isolated, and piecemeal reform efforts, which were able to attain a limited degree of success based on the commitment and involvement of just a handful of individuals. While easier to plan and implement, more limited and isolated approaches have numerous problems. Often they depend on the involvement of one person or just a few people. If those teachers or administrators leave the school or retire, their successful programs may end when they depart. More important, small, isolated programs are rarely institutionalized in schools; that is, they do not become a part of the school's everyday procedures and they do not have an effect on overall curricular and instructional practices.

Building school-wide support for new approaches is difficult in comparison with piecemeal efforts, but in the long run it is a strategy that offers far greater benefits. Comprehensive, school-wide reforms have the potential to make a positive difference in the achievement of all students, not just a fortunate few. Because they require extensive planning, needs assessment, data gathering, and a commitment to a solid reform model, they are more likely to become a permanent part of the school's methods and overall approach. Joining together in a comprehensive reform enables teachers, administrators, and other school staff to see the concrete results of their efforts in terms of improved student achievement.

6. PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Building support for comprehensive reform within the school is closely linked to effective relations between the school, parents and families, and the community. School-wide reform cannot succeed without support from all the stakeholders.

Particularly in low-achieving schools, however, getting parents and the community involved can be a significant challenge. Often parents of low-achieving children are struggling to balance their roles as parents and workers. The percentage of single-parent families in low-income communities is disproportionately high, creating even greater stress for families. Many parents may have had a negative experience at school during their own school years and may be reluctant to

become involved with the school. Nevertheless, research has repeatedly shown that parental involvement and support is one of the most important factors in children's success in school and later in life. Research also shows that educators can do a great deal to promote greater parent involvement. The Center on Families, Communities, Schools, and Children's Learning at Johns Hopkins University, for example, has found that "parents who receive frequent and positive messages from teachers tend to become more involved in their children's education than do other parents." In a study by Dauber and Epstein (1993) of 2,317 inner-city elementary and middle school students, the best predictor of parent involvement was what the school did to promote it. School attitudes and actions were more important than the parents' income, educational level, race, or previous school-volunteering experience in predicting whether the parent would be involved in the school.

Improving parent and community involvement, particularly in a school that has not experienced a great deal of success with it, is a major task confronting today's educators. Growing numbers of schools are demonstrating that it can be done, however, and it remains a pivotal element of successful comprehensive school reform.

For a wealth of resources on family and community involvement visit the following web sites:
http://www.wested.org/cc/html/other_websites.htm#FCInvolvement
http://www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/
http://www.ed.gov/pubs/studies.html#Family_Involvement
http://pfie.ed.gov

7. External Technical Support and Assistance

To receive CSRD funding, a school must secure ongoing, high-quality external support from a school reform entity with expertise in comprehensive school-wide improvement. The quality of the technical assistance can be an important factor in the success of the school's reform efforts. This external assistance may come from school reform model developers, a university, Regional Educational Laboratories, Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers, or other sources of assistance and support. It may be needed not only during early implementation of a particular reform model but throughout the school improvement cycle. Expert assistance must be coordinated to address all aspects of the school's comprehensive reform effort.

The incorporation of external support and assistance into CSRD recognizes that school-wide reform is an extremely difficult, challenging, and lengthy undertaking. There are no magic formulas to turn around low-achieving schools, and success comes only after years of careful planning and effort. Providers of external technical support and assistance are highly skilled in assisting schools as they grapple with the challenges of comprehensive reform. No matter how committed and idealistic they are, school administrators and staff should not be expected to carry out comprehensive school-wide programs on their own. *Getting Results II: Planning, Implementing and Sustaining Comprehensive School-wide Reform* will provide more information on how to engage and interact with service providers and model developers.

For a list of service providers and contact information see the *Resources* section of this guide.

8. EVALUATION STRATEGIES

Data gathering and analysis is one of the keys to successful school-wide reform. Simply put, the basic principle is "You need to know where you're going, you need to know how to get there, and you need to know when you've arrived." None of this knowledge is possible in a comprehensive school reform effort without reliable and objective information and evaluation data.

Data collection begins with the school's initial needs assessment. It continues throughout the reform effort as part of a continuing emphasis on evaluating the reform, getting measurable results, and changing course when necessary or appropriate. An effective evaluation plan is itself comprehensive, including many different types of assessment. One essential element is assessments of the extent to which students are reaching agreed-upon benchmarks and standards for performance in the core curriculum. Other elements include assessments of the various components of the school-wide reform program such as professional development and parent involvement activities. All should be part of a detailed and comprehensive evaluation plan that uses multiple measures and establishes benchmarks. Specific evaluation strategies are described in more detail in *Getting Results II: Planning, Implementing and Sustaining Comprehensive School-wide Reform.*

9. COORDINATION OF RESOURCES

A common misconception about comprehensive school reform is that it takes a major infusion of new funding and other resources. To a great extent, however, successful research-based reform models can be implemented without significant new funding. What is required is a new way of marshaling existing resources. In order to bring about meaningful change, schools must alter how they do business, not only instructionally but also in terms of how they allocate time, staff, and currently available Federal, state, local, and private funds.

Coordination of resources is a logical outgrowth of developing a plan for school-wide reform. One function of a needs assessment, for example, is to identify not just the school's most pressing needs but how they are being addressed currently and with what resources. If, for example, the school has a block of Title I funding for resource teachers who see a limited number of students during the day in a small-group, "pull out" program, the program planners might decide to use these same teachers in a different way by having them work as part of teaching teams in the regular classrooms. Only minor changes may be needed in order to make better use of the same resources.

The key to CSRD is to integrate these nine components into a coherent comprehensive program. The following are some of the challenges involved in integrating the components and developing a comprehensive plan.

Addressing the Challenges—What It Takes to Succeed

Clearly, comprehensive school reform is not a simple undertaking. Yet, it holds the potential for significant positive change at your school. The following sections of this guide offer practical suggestions and strategies for initiating the process of comprehensive school reform. Throughout the process, however, it's important not to lose sight of the larger picture and the key challenges. These include:

Matching school needs to reform models. Each school will have to determine its own approach to comprehensive reform. Which model your school chooses will depend on the results of your needs assessment and their relation to existing research-based models or strategies. This needs to be a thoughtful process that entails research and examination of each possible model. *Getting Results II: Planning, Implementing and Sustaining Comprehensive School-wide Reform* offers specific suggestions and tools to do this.

Aligning strategies with standards, goals, and initiatives. Clearly no school operates in a vacuum. Local and State initiatives and policies must be taken into account to develop your school reform plan, which must also be aligned with the content and performance standards of your State and district. Please see *Getting Results I: Gathering Information for Informed Decisions* for more details.

Identifying effective models that meet a wide range of needs. None of the 17 models highlighted in the CSRD legislation can address the unique needs of every school. For example, relatively few of the models were initially designed to serve upper-grade schools or have a distinct focus on serving special populations. Your school may need to seek out additional models, including locally developed approaches that will provide effective research-based strategies. Additionally, accessing models and supporting resources may be more challenging for rural schools. Also see *Getting Results II: Planning, Implementing and Sustaining Comprehensive School-wide Reform* for specifics.

Developing an understanding of schoolwide program flexibility. To get the maximum benefit from CSRD, schools with Title I funding should link their schoolwide programs (SWP) with CSRD. This requires a solid understanding of both programs and the flexibility each offers. For a matrix matching CSRD and SWP requirements see the *Resources* section.

Continuity and communication between schools and districts. For school-wide reform to succeed, the ties between the school and the district must be close, trusting, and collaborative. Both the CSRD and IASA legislation emphasize the importance of the district office in the change process. Although schools are expected to make their own decisions based on the needs they identify, districts are uniquely situated to support schools through brokering of resources, direct assistance, and other means.

See the *Checklist for Improvement* in the *Resources* section of this guide.

Special Note: The Role of Districts

"Get it, or get out of the way. **All** work has to support the classroom." This quote captures succinctly what one superintendent believes is his role and the role of the district in comprehensive school reform. Just as the principal sets the tone and vision for the school, the superintendent and other district administrators set the tone and vision for the district to support the reform mindset. "Districts are crucial to making school-based reform work and many will have to learn new ways of operating in the process." (CPRE, 1998)

See the CPRE Policy Brief, May 1998. Available online at: http://www.upenn.edu/gse/cpre/docs/ pubs/rb24.pdf

What the Research Shows: Lessons Learned

Schools are under incredible pressure to have a positive impact on student achievement. The call for change is urgent. However, for schools to succeed, there must be a trusting, supportive relationship with their districts. Often in failing school reform efforts, there are district-level influences such as budget cuts, inconsistent priorities, shifting initiatives, excessive red tape, or inefficient use of resources.

See: Quellmalz, Shields, & Knapp (1995) *School-based Reform: Lessons from a National Study*. Washington, DC: USDE. Available online at: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/Reform

A national study of effective school programs conducted in 1991-92 administered district surveys, conducted phone surveys of all state education agencies, and developed case studies of 16 districts and 32 schools. "The study found that the district can play a key role in helping schools overcome the barriers to change and take advantage of external support." (Quellmalz et al, 1995) The lessons of this research show how districts can support schools in their comprehensive reform efforts in four major ways:

- ✓ provide professional development opportunities
- ✓ offer sufficient authority and flexibility
- ✓ build and manage community support
- ✓ garner needed resources

Tool 4: District Self-Assessment Guide

What it Takes

For school reform to succeed, there first must be a supportive environment. Districts can play a key role in creating a climate to foster improved student achievement by:

- ✓ making academic achievement for all students a top priority by setting a shared vision and establishing clear, challenging goals for student achievement;
- ✓ providing adequate resources (e.g., staff, time, funding) to support planning efforts, professional development, and implementation;

- providing flexibility (changes in policy, decision-making and so on) in exchange for accountability;
- helping schools make sense of the larger system (e.g., feeder schools, transitions) and the connections within it, and helping to break down "turfs" and the categorical mindset;
- promoting family and community involvement by developing partnerships and an effective vehicle for communicating and feedback;
- setting high expectations, and supporting innovation and risk taking by creating district-wide structures that enable schools to be innovative and creative;
- changing district operating procedures when necessary—budgeting, personnel, accountability, professional development, and so on—to be highly supportive of schools and their comprehensive reform efforts; and
- monitoring the quality of technical assistance providers and helping schools choose models that best meet students' needs.

This list is adapted from materials produced by the STAR Center at the Charles A. Dana Center University of Texas. For more information call: (888) FYI-STAR or visit: http://www.starcenter.org

Additional resources include: *Lessons from New American Schools Scale-Up Phase* available at: http://www.rand.org/publications/MR/ MR942/MR942.pdf And *Implementing School Reform Models: The Clover Park Experience* available at: http://www.nwrel.org/csrdp/clover.html

In short, districts can play a leading role in fostering improved student achievement through school-wide reform. Collaboration and teamwork are essential. "[T]o play a consequential role, the district often needs to change the way it does business. In this sense, the ultimate conclusion is that the district is important to the success of school-based reform in proportion to its willingness to reform itself. Otherwise, wittingly or unwittingly, it may indeed undermine what school-level people do to improve schooling." (Quellmalz et al, 1995)

The framework for CSRD, outlined in this section, builds on much of what we know about how children learn and how organizations change. With the support of the district and external partners with expertise in school-wide reform, schools can use comprehensive reform strategies to improve teaching and learning and raise student achievement through consistent, coordinated efforts.

Building a Solid Foundation for School-wide Reform

Key Steps

- Develop a Leadership Team and Support Structures
- Survey the Territory
- Expand Ownership: Create Opportunities for Participation
- Prepare the School Staff for Change through Professional Development
- Build Enthusiasm and Proceed

Planning for comprehensive school reform is a significant departure from the normal, day-to-day procedures of most schools. A natural tendency is to want to plunge into implementation without doing the necessary homework. Choosing a reform model before you have established a solid foundation and conducted a thorough assessment of needs can stop or derail your reform process before it starts. To lay a strong foundation for successful implementation, therefore, special emphasis should be given to the early stages of comprehensive reform.

If I could... I would...

Develop a Leadership Team and Support Structures

Identify the Team Leaders

School reform efforts cannot be planned and implemented by one individual or even a few in isolation. A strong, successful plan will be the result of the school community uniting to focus on the plan's ultimate outcome—increased achievement for all students.

Effective leadership for school reform almost invariably begins, however, with a few committed individuals or champions who take responsibility for guiding the effort at the beginning and building support. This initial core leadership group needs to be committed to the process of continuous improvement: conducting the needs

assessment, writing the plan, and guiding implementation and evaluation. The core group will direct the planning process and either carry out many of the major tasks at the beginning or encourage others to join in.

There are many ways to form an effective leadership team. However you do it, the process requires careful thought. It may involve extensive conversations and meetings to ensure that all team members will be able to work together effectively and share a common vision of what they want to accomplish. The leadership team should consist of, but not be limited to, representatives from the district and school administration, regular and special programs (teachers, assistants, specialists), and parents. Students and community members can also be valuable contributors. The initial core group should be small, however--at least three at the beginning and not more than six, bringing together people with different backgrounds, skills, and knowledge. In general, team members should be chosen on the basis of their ability both to contribute a unique perspective on the school improvement process and to devote time to planning and implementation.

See *Educators Supporting Educators: A Guide to Organizing School Support Teams*, ASCD, 1997. To order call: (703) 578-9600 or visit http://www.ascd.org

Build Support

One of the core group's primary goals should be to build support of comprehensive school reform as quickly as possible. Depending on the conditions at your school, this could be a slow process spanning several months to a year. However, once formed, the leadership team should garner additional support from interested individuals who can offer unique talents or insights (such as thoughtful data analysis) but who may be unable to devote as much time as the initiators and champions of school change. The leadership team needs to be involved in every step of the school improvement process, but this support group may participate only when possible or needed. A variety of people interested in improving student achievement are likely candidates for this group. They include other school or district staff, students, parents, and members of the community who are knowledgeable about the school and committed to positive change. Involving others will help them feel valued and facilitate the "selling" of change and growth to the entire school community.

Define Roles and Assign Responsibilities

An important step at this point is to identify roles for all the key participants. These are likely to include:

- Managers to organize the effort, keep it in motion, and, once selected, coordinate with the model developer(s) and/or other technical assistance providers;
- Discussion leaders;
- Fact-finders who will do the necessary research to explore options and answer questions;
- Note-takers and recorders;
- Organizers to track schedules and make sure assigned tasks are completed; and
- Communicators who will carry the messages about proposed reforms to the larger school community.

Often these roles will develop naturally. Roles can also be rotated to balance control and responsibility.

Profile of Skills and Talents

Survey the Territory

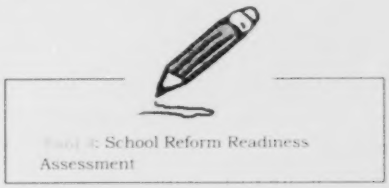
At the beginning, it's important to take time for some self-assessment or reflection, getting a preliminary fix on the structure, content, and climate of your school. This need not be a lengthy exercise, but it should be thoughtful and honest. Two areas to consider are the planning context and resources.

Planning Context

Take an informal reading of team members and others in the school-community about the school's current situation. Questions to consider might include:

- What is the nature of the school leadership?
- Are there existing conflicts or impasses?
- How well does the staff understand what you are planning? Do they understand the goals of school improvement?
- How familiar are team members with current research on successful programs and effective educational practices?
- Does your school have a mission statement or vision? Is it supported by the school community?
- What is the skill level of those undertaking the planning effort?
- How well do staff understand the breadth and depth of the needs assessment process and planning for school change?
- Are staff familiar with applicable program requirements, state and district policies, and the objectives of relevant programs such as Title I and Bilingual Education?

Based on your responses to these and other questions, determine where to start the reform effort. If you find your school mission statement hasn't been updated since 1988, you might begin by revising it. If the school has a new principal and ten new teachers, you might engage in team-building activities to foster collegial relationships and a shared vision for change.



School Reform Readiness Assessment

Resources

Take time to identify needed resources to support planning. These include:

- ***People***—school and district staff, community members, parents, and students. Consider anyone with a stake in what happens in the school as a potential resource.
- ***Documents, videos, research, and other support products*** that will inform development of specific reform strategies, professional development activities, and so on.
- ***Technical assistance and other service providers*** who will fit into the reform effort.
- ***Funding and time***.
- ***Networks***—interlinked groups of people, formal and informal, can be invaluable.

- ***Space*** could include a dedicated storage area for materials, a meeting room, and shelves for documents and other products.
- ***Materials***—paper, pens, chart pads, easels, markers, and other basics of effective meetings.
- ***Equipment***—photocopy services, computers, telephone, and Internet connectivity.

Take stock of what you have available. Determine if it's adequate. If not, maximize your existing resources or develop strategies for acquiring others. For example, time seems to be the resource everyone needs most. Determining strategies from the outset for using existing time more effectively will minimize pressures later. Discussions can include ideas about "creating" more time, for example, by rearranging student and/or staff schedules.

In short, the purpose of surveying the territory is to determine how prepared the school and its community are to engage in comprehensive school reform planning and implementation.

Expand Ownership: Create Opportunities for Participation

The most critical element of any planning process is the human one. Although at the beginning a few key individuals may be engaged in most of the details of planning, the commitment of the larger school community is essential to build a program that enables all children to meet the same challenging standards. Individuals from stakeholder groups must support the reform effort and be part of the decisions about needs and strategies. These groups include:

- ***All school staff*** such as teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, counselors, and support staff;
- ***Parents and students;*** and
- ***Community members and representatives*** of all student populations served by the school.

Strong home-school-community partnerships are fundamental to successful schools and have been identified in a wide variety of research studies as key components of

: *Taking the Time to Communicate*

In surveying the territory, a small rural K-8 school found that the level of mistrust among staff and between the school and the community was immense. It was difficult to bring even small groups together without a serious argument ensuing. Discussions about student achievement and reform nearly always resulted in finger pointing, and little progress was being made in developing a reform approach. Instead of moving immediately into implementation of new strategies for teaching, the principal chose to focus the first year on community building and creating a school vision in order to build support and secure commitment from staff and the community, thereby building a stronger foundation for their reform effort.

comprehensive school reform. The U.S. Department of Education guidelines for the Title I schoolwide program option and CSRD state that involvement of parents and community members is a requirement for school reform efforts from conceptualization and throughout implementation. Involving parents and community members is different from asking them to approve a plan or sign their names to a planning document. It is also different from asking parents to volunteer in classrooms or attend parenting classes. True parent and community involvement means that schools, families, and community leaders make joint decisions about the development of the standards, vision, and direction of their school.

- Design joint activities for staff and parents that are related to the reform efforts.
- Invite parents to design and conduct needs assessment activities.
- Invite others to assist in interviews with representatives of school reform models.
- Offer leadership training to enable parents to participate in joint decision making.

: An Unexpected Benefit of Parent Involvement

When parents become an integral part of a school reform planning process there can be unintended, yet powerful and positive, outcomes. At the end of a year-long series of workshops on school-wide reform planning with several school teams, the technical assistance providers conducted an evaluation. Participants were asked to rate not only the workshops but also the impact of the planning on their reform efforts. The technical assistance providers were pleasantly surprised when two parents declared that they decided to become teachers. They had developed genuine insight into the education process and felt that they could contribute even more as education professionals.

Launching a school-wide reform effort and expanding the ownership is, among other things, a process of building community. In order to increase the number of participants, it's important to "meet people where they are." Some participants will enjoy structured discussions of new ideas and plans. Others may not be as comfortable in group discussions. Make sure that a variety of opportunities for participation are available so that all who are concerned about the school and its students have ways to be involved. For example,

- Facilitate the development of group-process skills in parents and staff.
- Sponsor regular off-site retreats for staff, community, and parents to get to know each other and to develop skills for working together.

Beyond the usual handful of committed volunteers, involving families in leadership roles around school change may not be easy. It takes even more effort in communities where there are social, economic, cultural, and other challenges to involvement. In these communities, nontraditional strategies that emphasize personal outreach are likely to be needed and to build relationships with families that are based on trust and mutual respect.

Certain principles of effective outreach efforts apply to all the activities and tasks you will undertake. The first is ***relevance***. As much as you can, make every aspect of the partnership and planning process relevant to families. People keep coming back and joining in if the work is about the real problems and concerns of families and children. A second principle is ***ownership***. Give leadership to families and community members and design meetings so everyone can contribute to the discussions. Involve families in planning and implementing the reform processes, such as setting the agendas, facilitating discussions, researching reform models, and conducting needs assessments. A third principle is ***creativity***. Most schools rely on printed memos and classic teacher-led trainings or workshops. Try something different, because, like the students at your school, parents have multiple learning styles. A fourth principle is ***communication***. Effective communication is one of the essentials of successful outreach to families and the community. It's important, for example, to demonstrate respect for each family's home language and culture. Other ways to build effective communication include: use of familiar words rather than educational jargon; creation of a system for the ongoing exchange of information, such as a regular drop-in session or a "parents only" phone number; and small focus groups and principal's breakfasts to learn about family concerns and ideas.

Prepare the School Staff for Change through Professional Development

What you learn during this preliminary phase of school reform planning will determine your initial professional development activities. For example, after surveying the territory and your level of preparation to engage in school reform planning and implementation, you may discover the need to build staff capacity to conduct a thorough needs assessment. Another school may realize its need to engage stakeholders. Whatever professional development needs surface at this stage, be sure that these activities are integral to your planning and that they bear directly on the reform effort.

: Dispelling Skepticism

The school-wide program leadership team of a small high school located in a mountain community decided to interview all of the ninth-grade parents as part of the planning process. The team was shocked to find that parents seemed jaded by the notion of school reform. Many said that various school reforms had been attempted in the past but came to nothing. The team had to work on convincing the parents that this effort was serious and different from previous reform efforts. Thanks to their data-gathering efforts, which went beyond a simple parent survey, the leadership team gained important insights about their school's needs. For the leadership team members, data-based decision-making turned out to be a meaningful exercise and a turning point in the process.

Additionally, this may be a good time to start researching possible school reform models and strategies. This will engage staff in school reform discussions and get them actively involved in planning. More than merely a fact-finding activity, enlist staff to investigate possible models by having

them identify and review research and other resources, and create a protocol to review good "candidates." Note, however, that this should not be a process to select a model for implementation. Your goal here is to investigate options and engage staff in substantive discussions about school reform opportunities.

Build Enthusiasm and Proceed

Clearly, effective planning for school-wide change takes time, teamwork, and a strong belief that the goal is achievable. Create momentum early so the process doesn't lose steam. Build support through constant communication, positive attitudes, and anticipating problems. Be aware of potential obstacles and think about how to address them. For unresolved issues, consider whether they pose too much of a hindrance to move forward. If so, address them before proceeding. This may mean reconstituting the team, bringing in a moderator, or garnering more resources. Chances are that however effective your initial efforts are, you and your colleagues in the leadership group will encounter some obstacles. Don't ignore them, but don't let them stop you. In subsequent phases your team may find strategies for overcoming current difficulties. The important point is to keep moving forward.

: Tapping Community Resources to Build a Foundation

A school, situated in a wealthy county, faced two main problems: low parent involvement and scarce financial resources. Even though the school served primarily economically-disadvantaged students, their Title I grant funds were limited because of the small number of economically disadvantaged students in the district. To address this issue, the staff carefully selected leadership team members who had access to the resources that could help them increase funding and parental involvement. One member was a grant writer who worked at the local youth development program that served students from the community who attended the local middle school. She helped the school seek out additional funding sources, wrote grant applications and taught other staff members how to write grants. A second team member coordinated the school's volunteer services. He was a former teacher at the school who knew exactly what services the school needed and where to find volunteers who could provide the services. A third team member, had recently retired from the department of public health, contributed her computer talents by entering all of the needs assessment data and performing analyses. This saved the school hundreds of dollars. The school also invited the head of the Child Development Center located on the school's campus to join the team. The Center served pre-K children and families and served as a feeder for the elementary school. With the involvement of the head of the Development Center, the school increased the articulation between their program and the pre-K program. They were also able to instill in the parents of the children who attended the Center the importance of continuing their involvement in their child's education through elementary school. Finally, the school nominated a bilingual teaching assistant who worked at the school and had children at the school on the leadership team, since the largest single group of students came from Spanish-speaking households. Because the parent had many connections in the community, she served as the parent-school liaison and actively informed parents about the work of the leadership team and the school's school-wide reform plans.

Getting Results I: Gathering Information for Informed Decisions

Key Steps

- Develop a Plan for Assessing Your School's Needs
- Determine the Scope of the Needs Assessment
- Develop Guiding Questions to Examine Each Element
- Identify Sources of Information for the Elements of Your School
- Collect and Organize Your Data
- Analyze and Summarize Your Data
- Develop Goals

For both the CSRD program and the schoolwide program option of Title I, a thorough needs assessment is an essential and required step in the process of planning. It is also a basic component of any effective process for planning school-wide change. This section describes the key steps and components.

Develop a Plan for Assessing Your School's Needs

An effectively done needs assessment requires collaboration of all stakeholders, including the leadership team. To do it well, a plan to manage the work is vitally important. Because the needs assessment involves much more than just examining student work or test scores, the leadership team should have a clear understanding of what will be accomplished before beginning the process. As part of your planning for the needs assessment, preliminary consideration should be given to each of the following:

- Identify staff, parents, community members and students who will have responsibility for the needs assessment or be involved in the process.
- Determine the types of information already available about the school and where that information is located.
- Set up a schedule for meetings, work sessions, and deadlines for each task.

A well-done needs assessment involves two major procedures: (1) gathering data or information about the school and (2) analyzing and interpreting the data. Resources for data analysis should be an important provision in the management plan. Decisions should be made in advance about who will be responsible for the data once they are collected and how the analysis will be conducted. It will also be important to determine the time frame for data analysis, how the data will be presented to the larger school community, and how the data will be used to make decisions. The plan need not be elaborate, but it requires careful consideration and monitoring so that all critical tasks can be accomplished while ensuring that the workload remains manageable for everyone involved.

Determine the Scope of the Needs Assessment

The scope of the needs assessment is defined by what kinds of data and how much data will be collected. Needs assessment requires ***breadth*** of information for ***depth*** of understanding. To be comprehensive, the needs assessment should cover at least the following three elements of your school:

- Student demographics and achievement;
- Classroom processes and supports (which includes curriculum and instruction, assessment, professional development, and classroom management); and
- School management and resources (which includes school management, family and community involvement, and technology).

Although the needs assessment should be broad in scope, it should focus on what is most important at your school site. The first step in developing a focus for reform is to consider your state and district contexts. For example, you will need to include whatever state and district content and performance standards have been adopted. This will ensure alignment of local, state and national goals for school improvement and high academic achievement.

Tool 5: Determining the Scope of Your School Reform Effort

These considerations are only part of developing a focus, however. Equally important will be the most pressing needs identified through preliminary conversations about the needs assessment management plan (see Tool 7) and the most important problems confronting the school and its students.

Develop Guiding Questions to Examine Each Element

To maintain your focus, it's important to develop questions to guide data gathering and analysis. These questions will help you to maintain the focus of your reform effort as you collect and analyze data. They will also help you to avoid unexamined assumptions. At a minimum, the guiding questions should focus on the three elements identified above: student demographics and achievement; classroom processes and

support; and school management and resources.

It will be helpful to use ***"What evidence do we have ..."*** as the stem for all your guiding questions. The emphasis on evidence encourages you to avoid focusing on assumptions and to examine all data carefully. It implies that collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative evidence, not uninformed speculation, is at the heart of the investigation. (California Department of Education, 1998)

and skills. Within this focus, your examination of the various elements will lead to a profile of your school's strengths and weaknesses. The following paragraphs offer suggestions for gathering information in each of the three elements of the needs assessment in order to develop a comprehensive picture of your school and student performance. This, in turn, will facilitate research and selection of a school reform model.

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*: Clarifying the Focus**

When a school-wide reform initiative was launched at Washington School, a K-5 elementary school that serves an economically-disadvantaged neighborhood, the staff decided to focus on language arts. Although test scores and grades demonstrated that students had serious needs in other subject areas, the leadership team attributed the difficulties in the other subject areas were probably due to many of the students' inability to read at or near grade level. The principal agreed that this seemed the best way to narrow the scope of their needs assessment. Another deciding factor was the fact that the following year, the state's fiscal and accreditation review of the school would focus on reading. Student's reading problems became an important focus for gathering and analyzing additional data.

**The example of Washington School, which is woven throughout this section, is based on documented reports from a school that undertook a comprehensive school reform process.*

Tool 6: Developing Guiding Questions

The guiding questions will also help you to avoid focusing on one group of students as "the problem." Instead, the questions will help you to seek information about all students. Well-conceived guiding questions should inquire into the ***nature*** (what), the ***quality*** (how well) and the ***frequency*** (how often) of teaching and learning. For example, if your district's focus is on math, your guiding questions will ask how students are learning and demonstrating mathematical knowledge

Student Demographics and Achievement

Descriptive information on students should include data on gender, ethnicity, languages spoken, English fluency, socioeconomic status, special needs, and migratory or homeless status. Information for this element can help you understand the extent to which you are meeting the unique needs of your students and capitalizing on their strengths. By disaggregating data on student background, you can examine the hard question of whether your school is serving all students equitably. Another important source of information is students' participation and performance in extracurricular

activities, vocational training, internships, and community organizations or activities. This information provides different perspectives on students and can be invaluable for planning instruction that is both engaging and challenging.

Sources of information that reflect student academic performance include class work, portfolio samples, scores from textbook and teacher-made tests, criterion-referenced or norm-referenced tests, and district- or state-developed assessments. Discipline referrals; attendance data; promotion, retention, and graduation rates; and student honors and awards can also be useful indicators of student academic performance. Disaggregation of student achievement data allows you to see patterns of who is under-performing and which content areas give students the most difficulty. It also allows you to see if some grade levels at the school generally have better scores than others.

Standardized tests are easy to administer and routinely used; as such, they are good for the first level of analysis. They should then be supplemented by other kinds of assessment data for richer and more precise indicators as tools for school improvement planning. (Schmoker, 1991.)

: Focusing the Inquiry

The faculty at Washington School began their review of information related to student's reading problems by examining the patterns of student achievement in reading throughout the grades. This led them to produce a "developmental report card." Early in the effort they noticed that they had a problem analyzing the available data because the school's grading system was not based on an agreed upon rubric. In other words, they could not determine how much progress a student had made relative to set standards. Working in teams, the teachers formed four grade-cluster groups to rate each student's progress. This required them to develop and apply consistent criteria to judge whether a student's first and last quarter language arts grade indicated "great," "some," "little" or "no" progress. Through this process, the staff determined that approximately 75 percent of the students for whom data were collected showed some degree of improvement in their reading. From this initial review of the data, the faculty proposed several questions for the Washington school leadership team and needs assessment to investigate:

- *Do the trends and patterns occur for each grade level in the same way?*
- *How do the data look for different kinds of students?*
- *Are the students underachieving based on the "developmental report card" the same as those underachieving on the State norm-referenced test?*
- *What specific skill areas seem to be most troublesome for students?*

Classroom Processes and Support

There are four areas to examine in this element: curriculum and instruction, assessment, professional development and classroom management.
School reform works only when there is focused attention on improving curriculum and instruction. This requires teachers and administrators to take a careful, honest look at what and how they teach. As part of the needs assessment, it is important to examine whether the curriculum aligns with the content and performance standards set by your district. This area should also

include an examination of the philosophy that guides the curriculum and how instruction is provided. A determination should be made about whether texts, books, and students' independent reading choices reflect the diverse cultures or experiences of the school. Examining the extent to which instruction is designed to match the varied learning styles of students may also prove useful.

Assessment is closely linked to curriculum and instruction because teachers must determine what students have learned on an ongoing basis. The needs assessment process provides an opportunity for the leadership team and faculty to gather information and discuss whether the school has an adequate assessment system. The school might also choose to study whether school assessments are aligned with the content and performance standards as well as the curriculum, or whether accommodations in assessment are provided to meet the diverse needs of all students.

A strong professional development program is essential for comprehensive school reform, and your needs assessment should provide information about strengths and weaknesses of your school's professional activities. Information should be gathered about the types of offerings, topics covered, who participated, whether there were trial and follow-up opportunities for new ideas, and how well new ideas are being implemented. In addition, consider what kinds of continuing education opportunities or special training are available to and used by school staff. Also important to include is staff expertise in areas such as multicultural education, bilingual education, educational technology, standards-based accountability, assessment, and parent involvement.

See *Student-Centered Classroom Assessment* by Richard J. Stiggins. Macmillan College Publishing Company, New York. 1994.

Although effective instruction includes maintaining order and organization in the classroom, it also refers to the organization of learning opportunities, pedagogical approaches, the personal interactions among teachers and students, and the interactions among the students themselves (Neufeld, 1990: XI-13). The needs assessment should include information about the degree to which classroom management approaches impede or

Reading Check: Curriculum and Instruction Review

At Washington School most teachers worked in self-contained classrooms, although two primary teachers were experimenting with team teaching by co-planning lessons and swapping students. The leadership team devised a questionnaire to answer some basic questions about what was being taught during language arts when and by whom. They also studied the master daily schedule. They developed several questions to guide their data collection. These included:

- ✓ *How suitable and effective are current instructional materials, methods, and approaches for teaching language arts?*
- ✓ *Are any effective, research-based reading instructional strategies such as reciprocal teaching or cross-age tutoring being implemented across classrooms?*

enhance learning. Also worth examining is how effectively teachers communicate with their students and their parents about school rules and consequences, classroom procedures, and the evaluation procedures and tools used to assess student work.

School Management and Resources

The third element of the needs assessment consists of examining school management issues, family and community involvement, and technology.

A common sense of sharing and a commitment to the school's mission are important aspects of effective school reform. The needs assessment should address a variety of questions about the school's structure and management. These include how time is used, whether time is devoted to teacher collaboration for planning and work sessions, whether staff and parents are encouraged to express their concerns without fear, how policies are developed and maintained, how decisions are made, and how problems are addressed. Another key area to consider is whether staff and parents have opportunities to develop their own leadership skills.

This element also involves gathering information about the families in your school. Primarily, the information gathered should include family demographics, including the number of students under the care of biological parents, grandparents, foster homes or other arrangements, and homeless families. The needs assessment should cover information about parent activities at the school and the frequency of their participation. Opinion surveys about the school and the educational program are another source of useful information. Other data might include the times when parents are available and families' interests, talents, skills, or needs for such things as adult education and social services.

: *Classroom Management Review*

For several years, some of the teachers at Washington School had been using a method referred to as "assertive discipline." The approach had never really been defined to the community or other teachers, however; nor had it been evaluated. Most other teachers simply tended to send students they considered disruptive straight to the principal's office. While considering classroom management as part of the school's needs assessment, the principal realized that 20 percent of his time was spent trying to manage discipline referrals and potential or actual suspensions. Rather than jump to conclusions about what to do, the leadership team decided to study the effect of "assertive discipline". They interviewed teachers and surveyed students. As the process continued, the leadership team developed a set of guiding questions:

- *What classroom management approaches do teachers use during reading and ESL time?*
- *How is academic learning time used during the portion of the day defined by the teacher as language arts?*
- *What are general expectations for student achievement in literacy?*
- *Do all students have equal access to all learning opportunities and resources such as technology for writing or other innovative instruction such as the after-school tutoring program?*

Technology @ Your Fingertips: A Guide to Implementing Technology Solutions for Education Agencies and Institutions. National Cooperative Education Statistics System. On-line at: http://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/tech

Technology and Education Reform. US Department of Education. On-line at: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/EdReformStudies/EdTech/welcome.html

The third area under this element is technology. What you want to find out is what equipment is available such as computers, VCRs, monitors, overhead projectors, and other hardware; who uses it, how often and for what purpose; what is achieved by its use; and what is missing. Teachers should also be surveyed regarding the quality and availability of software and other materials for instructional use. Finally, you may also want to assess the effects of technology use on reducing paperwork and making administrative tasks more efficient.

Tool 7: Needs Assessment Management Plan

Identify Sources of Information for the Elements of Your School

Once you have defined the scope of your needs assessment (the "what"), you need to identify the sources of information (the "where"). Sources of information will vary according to the questions asked and type of data gathered. Following are sources normally found within the school, district, or community.

School and District Files

School and district files often include school plans, technology plans, evaluations, attendance records, reports on housing in the community, information about tests and grades, counseling referral records, compliance reviews, certification and years of service of the teaching staff, and demographic studies.

Instructional Records

Lesson plans, student work, curriculum materials, and assessment materials are good sources of information about what is being taught in the school. Teachers should be encouraged to conduct curriculum and textbook reviews.

Day-to-Day Records

Schools generate a wealth of data from their day-to-day activities. These include, for example, minutes or notes of PTA or other parent meetings and minutes or notes of faculty meetings.

People

Individuals (school staff, parents, students, community members) in the school and community are another important source of information. When gathering information from individuals, however, be aware of the importance of tapping all stakeholder groups and getting diverse viewpoints. For example, include school staff beyond teachers and administrators such as the school nurse, cafeteria workers, and custodial staff. Seek out parents and community members. Students

can also have sharp insights into what is happening at school and can usually be counted on to give honest answers.

The Community

Many community-based organizations maintain data on different aspects of the community, particularly students and families. For example,

- social service agencies maintain information about the students, families, and communities served by a particular school.
- police agencies can provide statistics about violence and substance abuse in the community—information useful for integrating Title IV programs (Safe and Drug-free Schools) into your reform effort.
- recreation departments can offer information about the community's athletic and recreational opportunities and after-school programs.
- businesses can provide information on the skill levels of recently hired employees and skills needed for future employees.

Data Sources Checklist

Collect and Organize Your Data

Once you've identified where the data are available, you need to determine how to collect them. Numerous methods are available. They range from written surveys and questionnaires to telephone and face-to-face interviews to group and "town" meetings, self-studies, checklists, observations, and reviews of existing documents and records. As much as possible, your goal should be to use multiple methods in order to present an accurate and detailed portrait of your school. Collecting data may involve:

- gathering and copying reports, records, and other documents such as achievement and test results, compliance review checklists, demographic studies, school profiles, and attendance records.
- conducting self-assessments, surveys, interviews and town meetings.
- observing classrooms and shadowing students which can provide information on what students actually do in various programs (e.g., Title I or Bilingual or Special Education) and classes, how instructional time is used, the nature of instruction, and the appropriateness of the curriculum.
- reviewing curriculum to determine how well the school's philosophy, goals, objectives, and instructional framework are evident in the curriculum.

A particularly important question for CSRD is whether an existing curriculum reflects the most current research and proven best practices. It is also critical to determine whether the curriculum is aligned with specific content standards and assessments.

For a resource on effective data use, visit the Maryland Department of Education web site at: http://www.mdk12.org/index.html

Once you've determined what to collect, where and how you will get it, and who will gather it, it's time to start. This may mean retrieving easily accessible records (perhaps making copies so as not to lose originals). For other data gathering, it may require designing and disseminating a survey. It may also include piloting an instrument to ensure its validity. In short, some data collection sources will be easier and faster to use than others.

As you collect information, begin thinking about the analysis. Periodically, review the data you are gathering to identify gaps or highlight initial results that may warrant further investigation.

A needs assessment is not completed when the data have been gathered. The true picture of your school will emerge only after the data are analyzed. Several steps can facilitate data analysis, including planning the analysis, conducting a primary review of the collected data, and cleaning up and organizing the data. These steps need not be sequential, but all should eventually be completed.

Primary Review

The primary review consists simply of making sure the collected information is complete and adequate. Review your information by asking:

- Do the data represent input from and participation by all the stakeholder groups?
- Is the information on student achievement sufficient and reliable, and does it represent data from multiple measures?
- Are all relevant grade levels and content areas represented? Were all curricular and extracurricular areas included in the needs assessment?
- Is the scope of the needs assessment broad enough to provide an accurate picture of the school? Are all elements covered?
- Is the information accurate? Does it make sense?
- Have all the student categories been included in the data (including all Title I, migrant, homeless, neglected/delinquent, American Indian, English-language learners, and students with special needs)?
- Do the data answer the guiding questions?
- Are all data related to the main focus of school reforms being considered?
- Do the data provide enough clarity to guide your selection of a school reform model?

Cleaning Up and Organizing the Data

It is important once you have collected data to make sure that your data do not violate any privacy regulations. For instance, students' names and identification numbers should be removed from all tests and questionnaires. Removing all names from the survey information used in your analysis should also be done to protect staff and parents.

The next step is to organize the data so they are useful and more easily analyzed. For example, survey and interviews data should be organized—using tally sheets—by major categories so responses from various groups can be disaggregated. These tallies will help determine the numbers of responses, percentages of types of responses, and the range of responses to each item. Develop charts or matrices so that information can be formatted and

summarized. Data summary sheets can help determine patterns and make calculations easier.

Tool 9: Data Collection Matrix

Analyze and Summarize Your Data

Analysis of data begins when you examine the data you have gathered and make decisions about the next steps. The decision may be to collect more information; it may also be to begin investigating research-based models to implement.

Guiding Questions Revisited

The guiding questions should play a central role in your data analysis. They can be used to identify gaps or missing data, and they can also help to determine whether the available data are appropriate and sufficient. As you review the data, begin to answer the guiding questions. Remember that with data analysis you are trying to define the problem, not solve it. Many school reform efforts have gone awry because reform teams began to brainstorm solutions before they had clearly defined the problem.

See *Setting Our Sights: Measuring Equity in School Change*. R.S. Johnson, 1996. Achievement Council, Los Angeles, CA.

Craft Needs Statements

The needs assessment process should produce a clear list of the needs and strengths of the school as they pertain to each of the elements. This is not a "laundry" list, but a thoughtful report based on the available information. The statements provide clarity and lead you to a discussion of program design. Your analysis should lead to specific needs statements about student achievement, curriculum and instruction, and professional development as they pertain to your focus of reform and give you a clearer sense of which models to consider for implementation.

Sometimes it may be difficult to know exactly what the data are telling you. The needs statements may seem too vague, for example. A review of the needs list may be useful to ensure it is on target and relevant. In this process of review, questions to ask include:

- How do you know this is a need? What data support this assertion? Are there multiple sources?
- What questions are raised? What more do you want/need to know?
- How will you find out?
- Does the needs statement allow you to get at the root causes of your needs? Can you identify the "why" of your needs?

Tool 10: Crafting Needs Statements

Summarize and Record Your Data

Consider writing a profile of your school and its community based on the data you have collected. This can serve as a "before" picture of the school to which everyone can refer as the process of change unfolds. This profile should examine how well the school is functioning, how well it addresses intended outcomes, and specific areas needing improvement.

Developing your school profile is a critically important opportunity to pause and reflect on what you and your team have accomplished up to this point. Take time to give careful thought to all you have learned and the questions you still have. Describe the situation as it exists and the needs to be addressed in your plan for improvement.

See *Data Analysis for Comprehensive Schoolwide Improvement*. Victoria Bernhardt, 1998. Available from: Eye on Education. Phone: (914) 833-0551, or visit: http://www.eyeoneducation.com

"Why do we need to do this?" you may ask. "Isn't this step redundant and just busy work?" On the contrary, for a team that has spent considerable time gathering substantial amounts of information and talking at great length about the school and its programs, discussions often go in different directions, interpretations commonly differ, and consensus is not always easy to attain. For these reasons, it is good to spend time describing what you have found through the self-study and what you have learned from your discussions. Only then should you proceed to develop a thoughtful synthesis of this information. There may still be disagreements within the group, but the effort to organize your thoughts and findings will help to focus your planning efforts.

In writing up your school profile:

- Determine the message you want to convey about your data analysis results.
- Present the data as simply and clearly as possible to convey the message.
- Develop charts and graphs with clear titles, legends, and numbers to convey the message.
- Compare your data to the nation, state, or other districts only when this is appropriate.
- Never display or provide data that will allow individuals to be identified.
- Write a narrative interpretation of the charts and graphs to prevent misinterpretations.
- State how parents and the community have helped and can continue to help.
- Make it very clear what your school is doing, or plans on doing, with the results.

Develop Goals

Your school profile can now be considered in conjunction with your original conception of the focus of your school-wide reform effort, leading to a statement of the effort's broad goals. Goals guide improvement planning and serve as ultimate standards for evaluating the effectiveness of the improvement effort. Without them it is difficult to know whether your school-wide reforms are having an impact on student achievement.

Well thought-out goals should be written in terms of student outcomes and should address high-priority needs. Additionally, each goal should include benchmarks to determine if it has been met or if progress is being made, and a timeline for achieving it. Goals need to be realistic, but they should also be bold. Worrying about constraints at the goal-setting stage will limit what you are able to accomplish. Consider developing goals for each of the elements of the needs assessment and align those to the nine components of CSRD. Several characteristics contribute to effective goal setting. School reform goals should:

- ✓ Be relatively few in number to build the potential for early successes;
- ✓ Focus on specific aspects of the school and its programs;
- ✓ Build on identified strengths while improving areas needing improvement;
- ✓ Be written in terms of student achievement outcomes;
- ✓ Include specific (multiple) measures or indicators of achievement outcomes;
- ✓ Include a reasonable timeline; and
- ✓ Include ways for determining, through benchmarks, if progress is being made on specific goals or if they are being met.

Tool 11: Moving from Needs to Goals

: Analyzing and Interpreting the Data

Each student at Washington School was rated by a consistent formula for what the staff considered to be the minimum grade level standard. For example, a fourth-grader had to have at least a reading report card score of 3 ("intermediate"), a norm-referenced reading test score of 50, and a writing rubric score of 3 to be labeled "at or above" grade level standards. The results were disaggregated by grade and also by ethnicity. The staff also examined how students were doing by different categories of need (e.g., Migrant, Limited English Proficient or Free/Reduced lunch program status). By analyzing and sorting the data in these varied ways, the school discovered that Hispanics, African Americans, and Asian Americans were having more difficulty reaching standards than other student populations, particularly in reading. As a result, the school decided to research instructional programs and strategies found to be effective for Hispanics, African Americans, and Hmong and Laotian students.

Getting Results II: Planning, Implementing and Sustaining Comprehensive School-wide Reform

Key Steps

- ✓ Select a Reform Model
- ✓ Design a Comprehensive Program
- ✓ Implement the Program
- ✓ Use Evaluation for Continuous School Improvement

Select a Reform Model

Completing a needs assessment pushes you to make decisions. This is when it's important to rely on the data you have gathered for guidance. The data should drive the decisions you will make about strategies for improving your entire school program. If your team is confident that you have done a thorough job of identifying needs and strengths of your school and core academic program, you're ready to make decisions that will advance your school reform efforts. A comprehensive needs assessment leads to a comprehensive design for improvement, one that incorporates all the components of an effective school.

In the CSRD process, the critically important next step is to consider the extent to which one or more of a wide variety of research-based school reform models may be aligned with your goals and will enhance your school reform approach. The task is to compare your school's needs to the strengths of the various models. But how do you proceed? How do you know a model is right for you? The following sections will guide you through the research, selection and implementation of a comprehensive school reform program, incorporating model(s) best matched to your needs.

Build a Knowledge Base

Gathering information about available reform models is the first step toward effective decisions about how to proceed. Information is widely available to inform your school reform process. The World Wide Web, for example, has increased access to all kinds of information about school reform to the point where the amount of information is

almost overwhelming. So it is important to approach this task with a clear head and three main strategies.

First, **tap a variety of sources knowledgeable about school reform models,** such as technical assistance centers, state departments of education, research centers, educational laboratories, or individuals in your district and school, or on the planning team. They can help you organize and scrutinize the information on models. Additionally, create a network of individuals who can provide input and insight into various aspects of school improvement. Support systems include the local school community, families, and other schools and districts in your area. State and county education agencies and other organizations can also serve as valuable resources. Such entities can offer feedback on your proposed plan, provide resources, share ideas, or strengthen motivation. Your leadership team should not work alone in developing the improvement plan. Building ownership and support is key, and seeking assistance is part of the process.

Second, **read and review the information as a critical consumer.** Evaluate carefully what you hear and read and discuss it with your team members. Analyze the evidence given for why the model works and with what populations. One useful technique is to find reviews that critique and synthesize research, often offering discussions of classroom implications and suggestions for implementation. Take this opportunity to do some research, read reflectively, and engage in professional discussions with your colleagues. Too often people jump to a solution because they read a brief description that sounds good, or someone delivers a convincing pitch for a particular strategy or program.

See the following resources:

Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program web site: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/compreform/index.html

An Educators' Guide to Schoolwide Reform. American Institutes for Research Web site: http://www.aasa.org/reform

Comprehensive School Demonstration Program Report. Currently in production (1998) Support for Texas Academic Renewal (STAR) Center. Phone: (888) FYI-STAR (394-7827) Web site: http://www.starcenter.org

Catalog of School Reform Models, First Edition. (1998, March). Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL). Phone: (503) 275-9500 Web site: http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/natspec/catalog

Tools for Schools: School Reform Models Supported by the National Institute on the Education of At-Risk Students. US Department of Education. Web site: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/ToolsforSchools

Third, **visit schools to see the various models in action.** Ask many questions and observe closely the activities at the classroom and school levels. Ideally, you should visit more than one school implementing the same model you are considering. In addition, participating in some of the activities, such as professional development offered by the model developer or other outside technical assistance provider, can prove invaluable. In other words, "test drive" the model, before you make a commitment.

Become Familiar with School Reform Models

An array of school reform models is available to consider for integration into your school's improvement effort.

Some models provide their own curricula and instructional methods. Some models take schools through a process of decision-making centered around a common perspective on teaching and learning. Some models serve both functions. One way to think about models is along a continuum from models focused primarily on curriculum and instruction to models focused primarily on processes and school organization. Most models fall somewhere in between these two.

As you explore the different models along this continuum, think about how a particular model fits into your school's overall vision and how it might be integrated with other strategies to form a coherent and comprehensive reform program that meets your school's identified needs. In addition, you will want to consider the strength of the evidence that a given model will work to raise student achievement in your school. The following paragraphs contain more information on these topics.

Curricular/instructional models. There are two levels of curricular models—*entire-school models* and *skill and content area models*. Entire-school models provide specific approaches to curricula, student materials, instruction (including teachers' materials and professional development), and assessment, as well as addressing school organization through prescribed patterns for staffing and school governance. As with other types of models, stakeholders begin with an informed, consensual decision-making process about the reforms that are needed. These models also emphasize the importance of improving nonacademic aspects of schooling (e.g., attendance, behavior), and they foster family-school connections.

Skill- and content-area models tend to focus on a single subject (e.g., mathematics or science), build specific skills (e.g., problem solving), or use particular teaching and learning strategies (e.g., technology and use of computers). Using a skill or content area model also involves staff training in implementation. Selection of a skill and content area model does not necessarily mean that the reform process occurs in isolated grade levels or academic subjects. Effective schools that implement skill or content area models may closely coordinate model activities with other components of their school-wide reform efforts. Effective schools also take advantage of opportunities to restructure the use of time, professional development, and other areas of school organization so that all teachers and students across grade levels benefit from the reform efforts.

Process/organizational models. With guidance from trained staff, process models engage local stakeholders from the school and community in determining a school's own approaches to curriculum, instruction, and professional development through a focus on a common core of values regarding teaching and learning. These models make use of principles of organizational development and large-scale organizational reforms. Steps in this process may include formulating a vision for organizational change; creating an organizational structure to carry out the vision, such as through work groups or committees; and locating and utilizing resources to engage the school in a process of continuous improvement. Instead of providing student materials and specific instructional approaches as curricular models often do, process models tend to focus schools on problem-solving through

staff and community collaboration and networking with other schools.

Even if you already have a blueprint in mind, take the time to find out about a range of models. Learning about and engaging in serious conversations on different kinds of models—even those you may ultimately decide not to pursue—will help you and your colleagues better understand the needs your school has identified and which models might work best in your school.

See the *Resources* section of this guide for a list of school reform model developers. Also see *Comprehensive School Reform: Making Good Choices*. (1998). North Central Regional Educational Laboratory. Available by phone: (800) 356-2735 or at: http://www.ncrel.org/csri/choices/intro.htm
Also see *A Handbook of Widely Implemented Research-based Educational Reform Models*. Laboratory for Student Success. Available on-line at: http://www.reformhandbook.LSS.org/
In addition, see *Seeing Progress* from AFT available online at http://www.aft.org/edissues/rsa/guide/change/seeing.htm

DETERMINE EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

After you've done the research, how do you know which model is best for you? Part of the process for answering this question is to determine the evidence of effectiveness of the model or models you are considering. In addition, CSRD places great emphasis on the coherence of all the components (e.g., curriculum, instruction, and classroom management). The CSRD guidelines outline that research-based models should provide evidence in four areas:

- ✓ **Theoretical or research foundation for the program.** The theory or research findings explain how both a comprehensive model and its practices produce gains in student performance.
- ✓ **Evaluation data showing improvements in student achievement.** Evidence of educationally significant improvement in major subject areas is shown through reliable measures of student achievement before and after implementation of the model.
- ✓ **Effective implementation.** Adequate information describes how to make the model fully operational.
- ✓ **Replicability.** The model proves that it can be successfully replicated in other schools.

Three examples of how schools can consider effectiveness are contained in the *Resources* section of this guide.

Tool 1.2: Determining Evidence of Effectiveness

MAKE AN INFORMED SELECTION

The actual selection of a reform model or combination of models is one of the most important decisions the leadership team will make as it moves forward with comprehensive school reform. Therefore, it should be a well-planned, carefully thought out process.

Your investigation and assessment of reform models will have given you a good idea of the extent to which each one addresses your specific goals and appears to be a good match with the priorities of your district and the needs you have identified. The next step is preliminary selection of one or more models that you believe will help in attaining your goals. Key questions to ask include:

- Does the model address the diverse requirements of federal, state, and local standards and mandates that apply to our school?
- Are we satisfied that the model adequately meets the need for a research/theory base, evaluation results, effective implementation, and replicability, as specified in the CSRD guidelines?
- Do we have adequate resources (personnel, time, and funding) to implement the model effectively? If not, how can we obtain needed resources or reallocate existing resources?
- Who else do we know who is familiar with the model or has actually implemented it? What do they say about it?

Comparison of Options

Getting answers to these questions will help to shape your choice of a model or combination of models. Once the leadership team has made this decision, it's time to take it on the road—to present it, that is, to a broader constituency in order to seek the support and commitment of the school-community. Steps toward getting this broader support include:

- Develop a concise summary of the model and how you plan to implement it at your school. This might be in the form of a one- or two-page position statement or a presentation with overheads, or both.
- Consider presenting more than one option for discussion. This might include two or three models that address your school's needs. Be prepared to inform others about the most important similarities and differences of the different models.
- Make presentations about the model(s) to diverse groups such as the school faculty and staff, the PTA, the district administration, and the school board. Ask for their suggestions and feedback. Make it clear that this is a preliminary recommendation only and that a final decision to adopt a specific model has not yet been made.
- Visit other schools that have implemented the model and ask key stakeholders such as school board members and local civic leaders to accompany you.

: Getting to Know You

A school in Kansas City wanted to become more familiar with a reform model that, according to reliable reports, had achieved significant success in a comparable school in New York City. To learn more about implementation of the model in New York and to develop a collegial network with the New York leadership group, the school obtained a grant from a local foundation that supported travel to New York and onsite observation of the model as it was actually being implemented.

As indicated by all these possible steps in the model selection process, there is no single correct way to proceed. However, there is a *wrong* way, or at least one that's potentially risky. Hurrying to make a decision and then presenting the decision to the broader school-community as final is an invitation to serious problems later on.

See *If the Shoe Fits*, Bryan Hassell, July 1998. Available online at: http://www.charterfriends.org/shoefits.html

Comprehensive School Reform: Criteria and Questions for Selecting School Reform Models, Education Commission of the States available at: http://www.ecs.org

Comprehensive School Reform: Making Good Choices. North Central Regional Education Laboratory. http://www.ncrel.org/csrd/tools/makegood.pdf

Finalize Arrangements with the Model Developer

Once you are confident that you have made the right choice in the model to adopt, it's time to finalize the arrangements, negotiate services, and clarify roles and responsibilities. In short, establish a formal agreement with your model developer. Put it in writing and be sure to secure district approval; there may be legal or other policy issues to consider. Some things to clarify in this step include:

- what you will get from the model developer such as, monthly on-site consultations, curricular materials, and staff training;
- what you are paying for and what other funds may be necessary to ensure successful implementation;
- what you can expect from the effort (What are the expected results?);
- how much flexibility you will have in the model's implementation (Is it highly prescriptive?);
- what you are expected to do as part of implementation;
- what the communication process will be (Who, when, how and how often?); and
- what the consequences will be if the relationship is ended.

Design a Comprehensive Program

As you design a comprehensive reform program, keep in mind these key caveats:

- **The model is not synonymous with the program.** It is important to note that selection of the model is not the design of the comprehensive reform program. In most cases, the model you choose to implement is only part of the overall school reform program you will implement.
- **Connect components to a larger reform effort.** A successful reform program will coherently integrate all nine components outlined in the CSRD legislation. This kind of integration takes careful attention and coordination among all staff at the school.
- **Avoid layering the reform effort on top of everything else.** Implementing a comprehensive reform program means involving the entire school. All current activities must be considered in relation to the larger reform effort being planned. Some activities may be integrated into the reform effort while others may be discontinued because they do not support the overall goals or aim of the reform effort.
- **Faithful implementation of a research-based model is essential.** Adopting a research-based model may involve learning and using new teaching strategies or altering the schedule of the school day. While

such changes can feel uncomfortable at first, research shows that schools successful in adopting a research-based model are those that implement the model fully and according to its design.

REALLOCATE RESOURCES

The emphasis of CSRD is on the improvement of the entire school, not tinkering at the edges or experimenting with isolated programs. CSRD funds may be the catalyst for getting a school moving down the path of reform, but they were not intended to provide enough resources to sustain the effort. Effective implementation requires a commitment to working together and a reallocation of existing resources.

What to consider. Schools beginning to implement school-wide reform will need to make difficult decisions about the allocation of resources. The overall plan or design for school reform, rather than preset categories of services or funding sources, should drive decisions about resource allocation and reallocation. A successful school reform approach integrates existing programs and funds into a coherent instructional program that will meet the needs of all students. All existing school and district resources—time, money, staff, and even space—should be put on the table for consideration.

Make no mistake: comprehensive reform involves meaningful change. It requires people to do some things, perhaps many things, differently. Changing the school's focus may necessitate significant shifts in financial resources. Districts and schools may have to reallocate resources long spent on previously perceived priorities such as instructional aides or even central office administration.

See *Rethinking the Allocation of Teaching Resources: Some Lessons from High Performing Schools*. Karen Hawley-Miles and Linda Darling-Hammond. CPRE. Available at: http://www.upenn.edu/gse/cpre/docs/pubs/pb-03.pdf

How to Rethink School Budgets to Support School Transformation. Allan Odden, New American Schools. Available at: http://www.naschools.org/resource/howto/oddenbud.pdf

Prisoners of Time., US Department of Education. Available at: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/PrisonersOfTime

The Uses of Time for Teaching and Learning. Studies of Education Reform. Adelman, Haslam, and Pringle. US Department of Education. Available at: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/SER/UsesofTime

Although the use of all the school's resources should be analyzed as planning for school-wide reform moves forward, four categories in particular should be examined closely (Miles and Darling-Hammond, 1997):

- ✓ The allocation and assignment of teachers and aides (e.g., Roots & Wings requires a full-time program facilitator and tutors, usually existing school personnel such as Title I-funded teachers);
- ✓ Teacher compensation (e.g., developing creative solutions to provide teachers with more time and resources to focus on classroom improvements);
- ✓ The organization and provision of student support (e.g., coordinating services already available with those offered in the community or through the district); and
- ✓ Spending on general and special program administration (e.g., consolidating Migrant, Indian Education, and Title I after-school

tutoring programs by making all of them available to all students, resulting in reduced program administration cost while increasing availability and quality of program offered).

The key to reallocating resources is to develop your budget, design schedules, and allot resources **after** the reform program is conceptualized and planned. Tailoring the reform program to the existing budget categories, schedules, and resources will limit what will be able to accomplish, and, most likely, you will continue to get what you've always gotten, low student achievement.

Tool 14: Reallocating Resources
See also, *Show Me the Money*, available from The STAR Center, Phone: (888) FYI-STAR (394-7827). Web site: http://www.starcenter.org

Start by taking an inventory of all your resources. List all your staff, their respective roles, and how their time is spent. List all your funding sources and how they are currently encumbered. It might be useful to break them out by categories such as federal (Title I, Title IX), state, local, grants, and so on. Finally, list all the

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Having more with the same

The leadership team of an average size high school realized after selecting its reform model that it needed to find more time in the school day in order for implementation activities to be successful. Teachers' time was already at a premium, so it seemed adding additional hours to the work day was the only way to go—not a popular idea. But first, the team decided to do a "time audit" to determine how time was spent now and whether or not schedules and activities could be reworked to "find" more time. The time audit turned out to be highly informative and the school implemented block scheduling which allowed for a two-hour planning session every other Friday. The school also redirected some funds to hire roving substitutes to provide small groups of teachers with additional time to work together on improvement activities.

What to do. There is no best way to reconfigure allocation of funds and resources. How you go about it will be determined by your local context and the resources you have available. Some factors that may influence your decisions include your school's specific needs, characteristics of your student population, the school's families and communities, the location of school (i.e., urban, rural, remote, inner city), district budgetary constraints, union agreements, and actual availability of resources.

equipment and other materials available. Once you know what you have, it will be easier to determine where you might best deploy these resources. Now list all the things you need to implement (models, activities, and tasks). Match resources to activities.

If gaps appear between your resources and what you want to accomplish, then you need to examine whether there are other resources available that you can bring into the mix (e.g., district or community agency resources, grants, and so on). If gaps still exist, consider the following questions (adapted from *Reference Guide to Continuous*

Improvement, Ohio State Department of Education):

- Have you really considered all the options?
- Are there some programs or activities that you have not examined closely because they are considered "off limits" by tradition? If they do not fit into your reform plan, they are up for discussion.
- Are some staff involved in tasks that do not support or fit with your reform effort?
- Are there activities that can be eliminated or scaled down without a negative impact on the effort?
- Are you making assumptions about how certain resources may be used and thereby limiting your options?
- Have you thought "outside the box," or do you keep coming back to the same set of activities and options?
- Can any activities be redesigned to be more cost-effective?
- Are there any activities that can be linked in order to share resources?
- What other funds can be pursued and which activities can be delayed until such funds are available?
- Have you considered the use of technology to facilitate activities or reduce costs?

See Reference Guide to Continuous Improvement Planning for Ohio School Districts. Ohio Department of Education. Available at: http://schoolimprovement.ode.ohio.gov

Special consideration: Title I Schoolwide Programs. Title I schools that have chosen the schoolwide program option have much greater flexibility in realignment of resources and funds than most schools. A

Working Smarter: Flexible Resources in a Title I School

At Kennedy Middle School about 50 percent of the students are eligible for either federal Title I money or state compensatory education money. The school has four regular education specialists (one each for art, music, physical education, and library services), four teachers and ten instructional aides paid for by categorical program funding (about $800 for each low-income student), and no pupil support services positions. In total, this school has eight teacher positions and 12 instructional aide positions above the base core of the principal and 20 classroom teachers. It also has a small amount of money for instructional materials and student trips, none for on-going professional development, and a smattering of technology.

Based on the school's needs assessment and a thorough examination of the reform models, the school chose the Paideia program. In order to facilitate and support implementation, the Kennedy Middle School team decided to:

- *Collapse the library positions into one position.*
- *Decrease the number of instructional aides to reallocate funds to provide professional development.*
- *Re-deploy the art teacher to provide release time for planning.*

Therefore, the school was able to maximize resources to develop a learning environment for teachers in which they could collaborate, learn from one another, and plan activities focused on addressing students' needs.

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schoolwide program allows a school to upgrade its entire educational program without being required to link specific activities, staffing, or student populations to categorical funding sources.

Develop an Action Plan

School staff become understandably frustrated when a plan is written but never carried out. The concept of action planning ensures that objectives will be met in a timely way and that specific individuals are responsible and accountable for the plan's success.

An action plan delineates specific tasks, first steps, timelines, benchmarks, person(s) responsible, resources necessary, and other planning details. Though seemingly tedious to prepare, without an action plan you will have trouble knowing what to do first and who will do it. Equally important, a well-done action plan will require you to think through the process carefully and anticipate problems and obstacles before they occur and, later on, can serve as a check on the program.

Action Plan Template

Implement the Program

When does planning end and implementation begin? When planning is viewed as part of the process of continuous school improvement, it actually never ends. Rather, implementation begins when you reach a point where you are confident about what needs to happen to improve your school. Successful implementation does not have a definitive beginning and end; nor is it typically a linear process. It depends a lot on the rigor and soundness of the school reform approach, the motivation of the individuals involved, and the accuracy of the needs your team has identified. In fact, implementation is a continuous cycle of planning, taking action, evaluating, and adjusting course, if necessary, that permeates any successful reform effort and guides future actions.

Implementation is driven by the action plan. As you move through the activities of your plan, review and revise it where necessary. Research has found that strong school-level improvement plans exhibit the following "truths":

- Curriculum and instruction are primary targets for improvement.
- Goals relate directly to problem area(s) and include benchmarks.
- Problem area(s) are identified on the basis of thorough, objective program analyses.
- Improvement goal(s)/plans are determined by consensus of all relevant parties and supported by the larger school community.
- Strategies and activities reflect effective research-based practices and models.
- Strategies and activities relate directly to improvement goals.
- Strategies and activities are integrated into a comprehensive program design.
- Family involvement and professional development efforts are linked to improvement goals.
- Implementation is continually monitored for problems, feedback, and adjustments.

- Administrative pressure/support ensures initial and continued implementation.
- Support and assistance from outside experts are an integral part of the process of planning, implementation and continuous improvement.

Review these statements to determine if all apply to your reform effort. If not, your approach may be incomplete; review and revise as necessary.

CSRD in the Field: An Early Report, (March 1999). US Department of Education. Available at: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/compreform/CSRD-99report.html

The continued involvement of the leadership team and the entire school-community is essential to successful implementation of comprehensive school reform. Your efforts must withstand shifts, bumps, unexpected changes, and other obstacles. A principal may retire, a major funding source may be readjusted or reallocated, or the school district may be required to adjust to state priorities—all are predictable developments in schools, and all can affect your reform efforts. Given the likely obstacles, several research-based strategies can help you ensure successful implementation.

PROVIDE LEADERSHIP

The role of the school administrator in reform cannot be underestimated. Technical assistance providers involved in guiding school staff through reform efforts have found time and again that without strong leadership, the change process becomes stifled and sometimes comes to a grinding halt. The leadership exhibited by the principal often determines how well implementation goes. Several of the school-wide reform models require that principals commit to being involved in all aspects of the planning, implementation, and evaluation phases before a school can embark on a reform effort.

To provide this leadership, principals themselves will need to engage in professional development. In schools where principals and other administrators have the opportunity to focus on their roles and their own professional development, those principals have been more confident in leading their schools through the reform process.

US Department of Education. (July 1996). *The role of leadership in sustaining school reform: Voices from the field*. Available on-line at: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/Leadership
See also: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/IASA/newsletters/profdev/pt4.html for a list of professional development resources nationwide.

FOSTER POSITIVE ADMINISTRATIVE-STAFF AND -COMMUNITY RELATIONS

True organizational reform requires people to work together as a team. In most settings, this is not easy. Issues of leadership, role definition, communication, decision making, common vision, and motivation are just some of the factors that influence how well members of a school-community will work together. The reality is that you can't mandate what matters (McLaughlin, 1990), because what is really important for accomplishing

complex changes are skills, creative thinking, and commitment. Shared decision-making creates "ownership" of school reforms. It gives teachers a vested interest in the success of the effort while promoting harmony and trust among administrators and teachers. A recently published report, *School-based Reform: Lessons from a National Study* (1995), identifies three strategies that are central to building a school culture that nurtures teacher collaboration and shared decision-making. First, successful school-based reforms develop ways for all school staff to focus on identifying significant changes. A second strategy is to reformulate the roles and authority of teachers and administrators to facilitate shared decision making for goals, plans, implementation, and monitoring. The third strategy is to reallocate school staff, resources, time, and space to promote joint activities and maximize resources.

Look for Early Successes

Implementation is about watching how well reform is working at the school. This is why establishing benchmarks is a critical component of the goals you want to achieve. All positive results, large or small, should be highlighted and celebrated. To maintain momentum, look for incremental changes that are immediately apparent. For example, developing a school mission statement may not seem like a major achievement, but it is something that can be celebrated and publicized, a statement around which everyone can rally. Leaders for the effort should check in regularly with committees or groups working on particular tasks so that everyone maintains interest and engagement. Everyone involved in the reform effort should know that others care about what they're doing and learning, so reporting back is also important. Genuine support for the work people are doing and recognition for real accomplishments should be the order of the day. Small victories count.

Manage the Plan

Some schools have appointed a person or team for the implementation effort, a sort of implementation manager who will organize, guide, and monitor implementation. This is meant not as a layer of bureaucracy, but as a point person to whom everyone looks for guidance. Choose a person who has strong organizational skills, is well respected in the school-community, has the time (isn't teaching full-time), and understands school reform. The implementation manager will be the "task master" of the action plan.

Secure Ongoing External Support

Both CSRD and IASA clearly state the requirements for sustained technical assistance and support, which research has found to be essential to successful planning and implementation of successful school-wide reform efforts because they bring in expertise. Schools can choose from many different forms of assistance that include: reform model developers, district or central offices, statewide systems of support, federally-funded comprehensive assistance centers, regional education laboratories, and universities.

Contact information about the networks of service providers is contained in the *Resources* section of this guide.

View Reform As Constantly Evolving (and the School as Continuously Improving)

Setbacks, large or small, can seem like giant obstacles. Whatever setbacks your school experiences, it's important always to keep moving. If, in evaluating implementation, you discover things that are subverting your efforts, take time to review the points highlighted in this section and determine if the absence of important factors in successful school reform may be hindering implementation. Then, engage your staff to resolve the issues.

Putting the Pieces Together: Comprehensive School-linked Strategies for Children and Families. US Department of Education. To order call: 1-888-293-6498 or 202-512-1800

Use Evaluation for Continuous School Improvement

Begin with Standards

Stimulated largely by Goals 2000 and the Improving America's Schools Act, a national movement has been under way, and every state in the nation is engaged in work to define clearly what students should know and be able to do in all subject areas and at all grade levels. Subsequent work has focused on the development or selection of an assessment to be aligned with the content standards and accompanied by performance standards. States are in various stages of development on this work. In this environment of increased accountability, each district is expected to develop an accountability system that measures how well students are performing and uses multiple measures to determine academic achievement. Schools engaged in school reform must address this component and maintain participation in professional development activities designed to support the development and implementation of a standards-based accountability system.

Promote a Climate for Data-driven Accountability

For a school engaged in comprehensive reform, reviewing evaluation results can be a source of joy, dismay, or confusion. Consider the following discussion:

> *"Are we sure?" asked several teachers. "We need to show parents how we're doing, and we don't want our report to be based on a misinterpretation or faulty logic like the one two years ago."*
> *The principal added, "I'm pleased that all students, including our migrant students, are doing well on the district writing proficiency test. I hope that our progress is a result of our new student groupings, getting the new English-language development materials, and the professional development we got from the trainer in the county office of education. But I'm still concerned about the norm-referenced test data not showing significant changes in reading. How can we explain this if the writing assessment seems even more difficult? Do we revise our plan to work on this?"*

The leadership team began discussing what additional data they might need in order to respond to these questions.

Discussions like this are increasingly common as schools move forward with comprehensive reforms and face growing pressures for accountability. Both trends place an increasing emphasis on well-planned and useful

evaluation methods. Rather than being a form of judgment, however, evaluation is increasingly being viewed as a way of understanding how the school functions and what is effective. A continuously improving learning organization uses evaluation: (1) to understand the impact and effectiveness of its actions; (2) to ensure the congruence and synergy of the elements of its vision; and (3) to determine how well new strategies have been implemented. Evaluation is necessary for making judgments about when, by determining which are most important for your school's reform. For example, if one of your goals is to improve instruction in reading, one strategy may be to provide teachers professional development in reciprocal teaching, independent reading strategies, and basic literacy skills for pre-literate adolescents.

Evaluation should occur at different times and ask questions that are appropriate for each evaluation phase.

: Evaluation as a Learning Tool

A rural elementary school was dissatisfied with the results of a reading program they had purchased to ensure all students were reading at grade level by grade three. With the help of a technical service provider, they disaggregated the reading program data they had collected. When the students' reading scores were sorted by ethnicity, the school found that students from the growing Hmong community achieved at a much lower level than all other students. Teachers in the school researched the problem and found that the Hmong students were making sincere attempts at reading but were missing certain word concept skills. The school immediately realized they had to change what they were doing in order to help their students read on grade level. The school decided to keep the newly purchased reading program since it worked well for many students. However, students who needed additional help with word concept skills or English as a Second Language development skills were provided with another reading program until they had developed the skills they needed. From their research and investigation into the students' reading scores, the school also discovered that the teachers needed additional professional development in the reading program so that they could support students' skills in regular classrooms. Once the changes were implemented, student achievement increased and teachers were better equipped to address the learning needs of all their students.

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the quality of the school and its programs. Information from evaluations provides direction for ongoing program modification and future program planning toward improvement goals.

Monitor Implementation

Components of your comprehensive school reform plan may focus on program design, curriculum and instruction, coordination, parent involvement, staff development, or assessment. Each component may have one or more activities designed to promote improvement. Make decisions about which aspects to review, and

Before the professional development workshops or institutes begin ask:

- ✓ Is the assistance offered to teachers a critical component for the overall school improvement plan?
- ✓ Are teachers aware of the rationale behind the professional development selection and how do they feel about it?
- ✓ Does the faculty generally support the idea? If so, should efforts be made to work on staff motivation first?
- ✓ Will the professional development provider offer follow-up support?

While professional development sessions are being delivered:

- ✓ Did teachers get adequate preparation and information?
- ✓ Can they translate this information into classroom practice, or is peer coaching or mentoring necessary?
- ✓ What materials might be lacking or useful for implementing the instructional strategy?

After the professional development has concluded:

- ✓ What evidence indicated the smooth incorporation of new instructional strategies into classroom daily or weekly schedules?
- ✓ What do the students report about what or how they are learning?
- ✓ What more do teachers suggest would help them fortify what they have added to their instructional repertoire?

Evaluation questions should be clearly stated, specific, and relevant. If they are too vague or general, they will be difficult to answer, and the results may be of little value. Anticipate possible outcomes for clarifying questions or selecting the most useful. Ask other team members to paraphrase the questions before beginning data collection to ensure everyone understands what is being monitored.

Plan Changes

Based on the results of your monitoring or evaluation efforts, your leadership team can plan refinements to your reform approach. As with other decisions in the reform process, these should be based on data and well-grounded research. A strong continuous improvement effort should identify not only whether or not a strategy had the desired impact, but why or why not. Consequently, you will be able to base decisions about mid-course changes on data and factual information.

Evaluate Outcomes

Different methods for gathering evaluation data may have been used in some form or another during the needs assessment phase of the improvement planning process. However, this time, the data will determine the effectiveness of the improvement plan, answering the questions, "How did we do?" or "Did we do what we set out to do?"

As is often noted, norm-referenced tests provide only one type of information about student achievement; generally, such information reflects a narrow sampling. To really get a picture of student achievement, it is widely recommended that other assessment procedures both formal and informal be used. These may be included in a system of assessment developed by the district with specific options and strategies. They may also be part of a school-developed assessment system that focuses on classroom assessments used as an ongoing part of instruction.

Summative data should not be limited to achievement or assessment data alone. Other methods can be used to gather data to evaluate progress and examine if and how much change has occurred, and the quality of that change. Surveys and interviews can gather opinions on all aspects of school operations from administrators, special program staff, regular program teachers, parents, and students. Observations of classroom activities and teacher strategies can gather first-

hand evaluations. Self-assessment worksheets can provide valuable information as well, particularly if the data are compared to the earlier needs assessment.

Data gathered during evaluation move you toward a profile of the program. Again, this can be used to compare to the earlier profiles. Have the data changed? If so, how? If not, why not? Are the changes positive? What occurred that was not anticipated? What can you learn from this? What are implications for next year?

Use Multiple Measures

As emphasized in the comprehensive needs assessment section of this guide, conclusions about data should be supported by several sources. If a monitoring process suggests a general lack of enthusiasm among families and faculty about a new school day schedule, several data collection methods or sources should corroborate the interpretation. If an evaluation indicates that most students are improving math skills, then several kinds of data (grades, SAT scores, norm-referenced test, the district math proficiency test) should support this finding.

Consider whether your data will be adequate to ensure satisfactory judgments or decisions. For example, if you want to know if the 12 instructional assistants (para-educators) in your school are applying information they gained from a training program about developing students' English vocabulary, feedback from only three would be insufficient. In other words, be sure that your judgments are based on strong, corroborated data that justify actions taken.

Review informational sources and ask technical assistance providers for help. They can help you find, review, and select appropriate methods and instruments for collecting data to answer the questions of your monitoring and evaluation plan. Some simple suggestions include: ask staff and faculty, examine materials, observe teachers/students, ask students, review various types of data about children's learning, and use multiple techniques.

: *Learning by Doing*

A high school staff sought to implement a number of reforms in their obviously failing school. These included a new writing program, a new computer lab, experimentation with teaming arrangements among teachers, and a participatory management structure. Before long the teacher-leaders realized that things still were not working and that bolder changes were necessary. Inspired by the ideas of the director of the district's professional development academy, the teachers adopted a more systematic approach. The design team began with three components: (1) a planning year; (2) a search for outside resources; and (3) an interim administrative structure.

The school benefited from its previous experience with participatory management. The design team was successful in securing additional resources, and in addition to the interim administrative structure, the school adopted a new curriculum structure that separated the school into three divisions. Teacher teams within each division share a common planning period and select staff development offerings available through the district professional development academy, the Coalition for Essential Schools, or a local university. The teacher teams began to experiment with team teaching, thematic units, and cooperative learning.

See *Building Blocks for Continuous Improvement* in *An Idea Book on Planning, Volume 1*, p.125, US Department of Education. 1998. Available at: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/ Idea_Planning/

INFORM STAKEHOLDERS

All stakeholders are critical players in the reform process. Therefore, as you gather information about the success and failures of your strategies, you must inform school staff, parents, community members, board members, and so on. Highlighting successes will allow you to maintain or garner additional support.

On the other hand, reporting failures to the larger school community may seem like a sure way to elicit negative reactions. However, lack of information may be more damaging. Keeping bad news from others can foster rumors, feelings of mistrust, and general unease. It is better to share the facts and solicit input.

CREATE A USER-FRIENDLY DATA STORAGE SYSTEM

Keeping good records can help to guide the improvement of what is most important to the overall school organization and will reflect the multidimensionality of each unique school organization. It will simplify the evaluation of schools. This type of record keeping must facilitate the continuous collection and assessment of evidence; it is always evolving and enables schools to make better decisions. It is not intended to be a filing system, but an interactive repository of data.

Reality Check: Holes in the Fabric

With the help of an outside technical assistance provider, the staff, parents, community members and upper grade students of a middle school had been involved in a year-long planning process to create their school-wide reform program. By the middle of the second year, they felt that they were not making the progress in implementation that they had expected. They had kept their data, planning documents and other evidence of their work in a binder. Their data keeping was more akin to a scrapbook than a portfolio. They had never actually assessed themselves on the school-wide rubrics that had been suggested by the technical assistance provider. Recognizing that something was holding them back, they were ready to try using the rubrics by January of the second year. All of the staff members and a group of active parents participated in the assessment. They found that they had "holes in the fabric" of the organizational structures they needed to support their improvement efforts. Their self-assessment uncovered problems in the areas of communication (governance) and professional development. What they had thought were adequate structures in the absence of school-wide measurement standards did not hold up when examined against the rubrics. From the discussion that accompanied the self-assessment, the school community quickly determined their next steps and put themselves back on track.

See *Data Analysis for Comprehensive Schoolwide Improvement* and *The School Portfolio: A Comprehensive Framework for School Improvement*. Victoria Bernhardt. Available from: Eye on Education, Phone: (914) 833-0551, Fax: (914) 833-0761, Web site: http://www.eyeoneducation.com

Some districts have a sophisticated database system and are client-driven (working to support schools and principals) with requests

for data summaries. Others have volunteer or internal support and must purchase or develop their own database system for tracking academic outcomes. Database vendors are now pursuing individual schools as clients with systems compatible to their district's data source. Seek out these resources as you set out to develop databases of your information. Minimally, you should maintain a data storage box with hanging file folders. The box should have only essential files and be light enough to cart to meetings of the monitoring and evaluation team. In short, good documentation of your reform efforts—be it electronic or paper—serves as a public record to communicate important information about your school: its purpose, mission and vision, and the values and beliefs held by staff.

Epilogue

School reform is not a process that happens in a linear fashion, nor can it be accomplished by following a recipe book. If it were, the task of improving America's schools would be much easier. Instead, meaningful school improvement is a long-term change process that requires a clear conceptual framework, specific components that address the entire school structure, and ways of evaluating progress and changing course when necessary.

We hope this guidebook has provided you with the necessary tools, information and ideas to move forward in planning, designing and implementing a comprehensive school reform effort. We encourage you to seek out other resources, such as those highlighted in the text boxes; consult experts and service providers, such as those listed in the *Resources* section; and build support structures within your community and networks with other schools. But above all, make this reform effort your own. Only you know your school, students and context. Make thoughtful, well-researched decisions, and your children will benefit.

Visit www.csrdweb.net to become part of a growing number of schools engaged in comprehensive reform who participate in this interactive web site to share information, build networks, view profiles, participate in on-line discussions and search for resources.

This guide is available on-line at: www.wested.org/csrd/guidebook.

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Tools and Activities

Tool 1: District Self-Assessment Guide

Tool 2: If I could . . . I would . . .

Tool 3: Profile of Skills and Talents

Tool 4: School Reform Readiness Assessment

Tool 5: Determining the Scope of Your School Reform Effort

Tool 6: Developing Guiding Questions

Tool 7: Needs Assessment Management Plan

Tool 8: Data Sources Checklist

Tool 9: Data Collection Matrix

Tool 10: Crafting Needs Statements

Tool 11: Moving from Needs to Goals

Tool 12: Determining Evidence of Effectiveness

Tool 13: Comparison of Options

Tool 14: Reallocating Resources

Tool 15: Action Plan Template

Tool 1: District Self-Assessment Guide

Purpose: To help district staff reflect on their key roles in support of comprehensive school reform and identify areas needing improvement.

Materials: Depending on your results in completing this tool, you may want to gather articles, reference materials, and key contacts to help you address the issues raised by this instrument.

Directions: Answer each question honestly. If your answer is "yes" or "some", note what evidence you have. If appropriate, describe any next steps.

Questions	Yes	Some	No	Evidence	Notes / Next Steps
Theme 1: *Number One Priority is Academic Achievement for Every Student*					
Does the district minimize distractions that take energy away from teaching and learning?					
Does the district keep discussions about academic attainment in the forefront of the dialogue with school staff, parents, students, and community members?					
Does the district link evaluations of employee performance to academic attainment of students?					
Theme 2: *Establish Clear, Challenging Goals for Student Achievement*					
Does the district demonstrate a clear vision for academic achievement, including measurable goals for all students?					
Is every school required to set and meet measurable goals for academic achievement?					
Are there challenging standards in place for language arts, math, and other core subjects?					
Are the standards integrated into classroom practice (instruction, materials)?					
Does the district provide resources (professional development, funding, other kinds of support) for schools to meet the goals & standards?					
Has the district identified multiple measures to assess school progress?					
Does the district have a policy of accountability or clearly defined response when goals are not met?					

Questions	Yes	Some	No	Evidence	Notes / Next Steps
Is this policy helpful to schools in taking corrective steps?					
When schools fail to meet the goals, does the district provide resources/help?					
Are there the same high expectations of all students? Are there different expectations for students of poverty, with different language backgrounds or ethnicity?					
Does the district take responsibility for non-attainment of goals or failure to meet expectations? If not, who does the district say is responsible?					
Theme 3: *Insist that Schools Have Believable Plans for Making Substantial Progress toward Challenging Goals and Objectives*					
Does the district assist schools in creating plans that are comprehensive and connect multiple requirements of various funding sources into one coordinated effort?					
Does the district provide support to schools in development of comprehensive school-wide plans to improve student learning results?					
Does the district monitor and assist schools to ensure that school plans articulates a set of activities that will help the school attain its goals?					
Do district staff meet regularly with principals and other key staff to discuss the progress of schools in meeting the goals of their school plans?					
Are district resources available to help schools that fail to adequately meet their stated goals and objectives?					
Can the district identify cases where resources have been added or reallocated to address problems?					
If there is a perceived lack of resources, does the district promote creative use of resources and the development of new resources to ensure needs are met?					
Theme 4: *Provide Resources to Support Professional Development*					
Does the district have a plan for providing professional development opportunities for school personnel to observe, plan, and try out new practices?					
Does the district ensure that teachers have ongoing opportunities to be observed, to receive feedback, and to incorporate feedback?					

Questions	Yes	Some	No	Evidence	Notes / Next Steps
Does the district ensure that new teachers have opportunities to observe internal or outside experts, and to receive coaching?					
Does the district require schools to create their own staff development plans?					
Does the district help schools with the review and selection of innovative instructional approaches based upon assessment of student data and staff needs?					
Does the district ensure that outside expertise is available to schools to build and sustain local capacity?					
Does the district monitor or coordinate the professional development support provided by outside experts or developers of research-based models?					
Theme 5: *Provide Flexibility in Exchange for Accountability*					
Does the district provide schools with greater flexibility and decision making in exchange for accountability for student results?					
Does the district provide schools with a high degree of budget authority?					
Does the district offer schools sufficient opportunities to share and learn from other schools' successes or failures with their experiments?					
Does the district provide opportunities for dialogue with schools that have successfully implemented school-wide models?					
In situations where state or federal rules are barriers, have waivers been sought or efforts been made to negotiate changes in policies?					
What else can the district do to support innovation?					
Theme 6: *Help Schools See Themselves as Part of the System*					
Does the district provide articulation across schools so that they see themselves as part of a system as a whole?					
Does the district frequently engage principals and staff in cross-grade level dialogue about standards and academic goals and objectives?					

Questions	Yes	Some	No	Evidence	Notes / Next Steps
Are there clear expectations regarding the preparation of students to make a successful transition to challenging coursework as they progress to the upper grades?					
Does the district communicate to all schools clear criteria for accountability if students fail to make a successful transition to the next grade span?					
Does the district focus cross-grade level and cross-subject area collaboration on instructional improvement and improved student learning?					
Does the district provide direct assistance to increase collaboration and cooperation across grade levels and subject areas?					
Does the district enable schools to bring cross grade-level and cross-subject area teams of teachers together to focus on academic success?					
Does the district provide support for administrators (e.g., through coaching or intervention) who do not promote adequate collaboration?					
Does the district provide sufficient access to services needed by all students across all grade levels?					
Does the district communicate to all families across all grades (especially new families) the expectations of what their children should know and be able to do?					
Are sufficient efforts made to ensure all students, including LEP and special ed, have the opportunity to meet challenging standards across all grades?					
Are teachers aware of district support services to help them serve students who need timely and appropriate intervention in order to meet challenging standards?					
Theme 7: *Expect Continuous Improvement*					
Does the district promote a climate of continuous improvement and does it demonstrate that it values a passion for learning, growing, and improving?					
Is there a district-wide process in place to support continuous planning for school improvement?					
Does the district engage in ongoing evaluation and use data to gauge school progress?					

Questions	Yes	Some	No	Evidence	Notes / Next Steps
Does the district assist schools in evaluating their progress with reform?					
Does the district require that data be provided by external research-based providers whose instructional designs or materials have been adopted by schools?					
Does the district report data publicly?					
Does the district help schools analyze student data and use them to make improvements (e.g., make changes in instruction, professional development, and budgets)?					
Does the district acknowledge or reward schools when they meet district-wide goals?					
Does the district call upon schools who meet goals to share strategies across the district?					
Does the district take corrective action based upon data findings—and respond to schools when they fail to meet goals?					
Does the district provide training or support for the continuous learning process of both administrators and school personnel?					

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Tool 2: If I could . . . I would . . .

Purpose: To think creatively about what reform might look like at your school; to start generating ideas about what activities or strategies you might pursue; and to gather information about what others are thinking.

Materials: Chart paper, tape, markers, enough copies of this worksheet for each participant.

Directions:

1. Respond to the statement in italics below and write down your ideas. Take enough time to generate a large number of ideas.
2. Discuss your ideas with others (in pairs or small groups).
3. Share out with the whole group and record on chart paper.
4. Review what is on the chart paper and identify themes or categories (e.g., curricular changes, safety issues, professional development opportunities, and so on).
5. Debrief and discuss the results. Keep these notes handy, type them up or keep the charts posted. You should refer to them throughout your planning effort.

If I were empowered to reform my own school, I would . . .

Tool 3: Profile of Skills and Talents

Purpose: To develop a profile of desired skills and talents of individuals to include on the team.

Directions:
1. Review the list of *skills and talents*. Check off the ones you think will be critical to include on your team. Add any others you think are important.
2. For each skill or talent you've checked, identify individuals who possess that skill or talent.
3. Identify any potential barriers to participation that may keep a person from being part of the team (e.g., overloaded schedule).
4. Find creative ways to address the barriers.

Skills and Talents

- ❑ Writing
- ❑ Meeting management
- ❑ Detail oriented
- ❑ Time keeper
- ❑ Meeting facilitation
- ❑ Team-building
- ❑ Communication
- ❑ Technology
- ❑ Data Analysis
- ❑ Linked to community
- ❑ Project management
- ❑ Grant writing
- ❑ Budgeting/finances
- ❑ Note taking
- ❑ Public relations
- ❑ Creative
- ❑ Thinks "out of box"
- ❑ Visionary
- ❑ Action oriented
- ❑ Other:_____
- ❑ Other:_____
- ❑ Other:_____
- ❑ Other:_____
- ❑ Other:_____
- ❑ Other:_____

Skill/Talent	People	Potential barrier to participation	Ways to overcome barrier

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Tool 4: School Reform Readiness Assessment

Purpose: To assess your school's readiness to begin the process of comprehensive school reform; and, based on the results, determine what preparatory activities to develop.

Materials: Depending on your results, you may want to gather articles, "idea" books, and other reference materials to help you address the issues raised by this instrument.

Directions: Part I: Write answers to each question and determine whether or not there are implications and next steps to pursue.
Part II: Identify the resources you can mobilize to support your planning effort. Develop creative solutions for garnering missing resources.

Part I: Context Assessment

Questions	Answers	Implications and Next Steps
	Leadership	
What is the style of the school's leadership?		
How are decisions made?		
Is there an existing school leadership team? If so, what have been its efforts and outcomes to date?		
How are school-wide planning team members selected? How representative are they of the school community?		
	Stakeholder Buy-in and Involvement	
How long has most of your school staff been at the site? Has there been much turnover in staff?		
What is the staff's level of commitment to change?		
Are there existing conflicts? If so, what are they?		
Does your school have a vision statement? When was it created/updated? Is it supported by the school community? Are there competing visions?		

Questions	Answers	Implications and Next Steps
What is the school community's commitment to participate/support in the comprehensive school reform effort?		
How well does the staff understand comprehensive school reform?		
Does your team adequately represent the key stakeholders from within and outside the school? How do you recruit members?		
Are your key stakeholders informed and supportive? (Parents, community, board)		
What role might students play in the process? How might their voices be included?		
Planning Efforts		
Have staff worked together on a similar effort? If so, with what level of success?		
How familiar are staff with current research on successful programs and effective educational practices?		
How will you organize your work? Define the tasks and timelines?		
Do you have enough staff to do the work?		
Have you set aside adequate time to engage in the planning effort?		
How will you establish roles and responsibilities?		
How will you keep the larger school community involved and informed of your efforts?		

Questions	Answers	Implications and Next Steps
How will you make decisions that everyone can live with?		
Do you have fall back strategies for when the group cannot reach consensus?		
How will you manage conflicts when they arise?		
How well do staff understand the breadth and depth of the needs assessment process?		
Are multiple sources of data readily available for analysis? If so, which data?		
If you currently or are eligible to operate a schoolwide program		
What will be the relationship between the schoolwide planning team and the school leadership team?		
How well do you understand the link between CSRD and SWP?		
Other Factors (add as appropriate)		

Part II: Taking Stock of Resources for Planning

Resource	What we have	What we need	How we will get it
People: Any individuals who have special knowledge or skills and can contribute to your reform effort (e.g., community liaison, district administrator.)			
Space: Any rooms, closets, work areas, shelves, or cabinets you can dedicate to this effort.			
Materials: Paper, pens, chart packs, markers, post-its® and so on.			
Equipment: Photocopy machines or services, computers and software, telephones, internet connectivity.			
Products: Journals, books, and other paper documents; videos, audio tapes, CD-ROMs.			
Technical Assistance: Service provider who can offer expert assistance (e.g., Comprehensive Center, model developer, Regional Lab, University)			
Funding: Any sources of funding that can be used to support planning and implementation. (hiring substitutes, stipends, purchase of materials, etc)			
Time: Schedule of meetings, creative ways to find more time, and so on.			
Other:			

Tool 5: Determining the Scope of Your School Reform Effort

Purpose: To establish a direction for your reform effort and a focus for your needs assessment and planning activities by identifying requirements and effects of Federal, state, and district guidelines and policies.

Materials: Chart paper, markers, pens, copies of this tool for each participant.

Directions: Use a chart paper to build a "life-sized" wall chart containing the following relevant information and follow the listed steps.

Step 1:

For each instructional area, identify district and state ***standards*** that are priorities.

	Literacy		Math	Science	Other
	Reading	Writing			
State Standards					
District Standards					

Step 2:

For each area, identify federal, state and district ***initiatives***.

	Literacy		Math	Science	Other
	Reading	Writing			
State Initiative					
District Initiative					
Federal Initiative					

Step 3:

For each area, identify the ***priorities*** of state, federal and state programs, such as Title I or Title VII.

	Literacy		Math	Science	Other
	Reading	Writing			
State Program Priority					
District Program Priority					
Federal Program Priority					

Step 4:

Collect aggregated school performance data based on state and district assessments. Indicate how your school is performing on district, state and district assessments in the different instructional areas.

	Literacy		Math	Science	Other
	Reading	Writing			
State Assessment					
District Assessment					

Step 5:

Based on the standards, initiatives and program priorities you identified, is there a clear pattern or area of improvement that emerges? If so, what is it?

One of the most important improvement areas we need to focus on as an entire school is _____

Tool 6: Developing Guiding Questions

Adapted from "Phase II: The Curriculum Self-Review Process," *Guide and Criteria of the Program Quality Review (PQR)*, 1998, California Department of Education: Sacramento, CA, pp. 23-25.

Purpose: To develop guiding questions for your needs assessment.

Directions:

- Answer questions 1 to 4. They are designed to guide you in identifying the *nature*, *frequency*, and *quality of* teaching and learning at your school.
- Consider using *What evidence do we have that all our students are . . .?* at the start of each of your guiding questions.
- An example is provided at the end of this tool.

1. Based on the results in Tool 5, *Determining the Scope of Your School Reform Effort*, what subject matter will be the focus of your school reform (e.g., language arts)?

2. What evidence are you planning to collect and analyze to investigate the *nature* of the learning in that subject matter? What are the kinds of learning activities in which students are engaged? Does the variety of student work reflect appropriate grade level content standards?

3. What is the *quality* of teaching and learning that occurs in the classroom?
   a) Do students understand the content being presented? What is the quality of their work in relation to state or locally defined performance standards?
   b) What is the level of performance of your students' work (e.g., organized around a coherent thesis statement that demonstrates a command of standard English)?

4. What is the *frequency* of quality teaching and learning in the classroom? How often do students engage in quality teaching and learning? How often do students demonstrate proficient performance based on standards (e.g., weekly, monthly)?

Example:
What evidence do we have that all our students are able to deliver brief recitations and oral presentations, on a weekly basis, about familiar experiences or interests organized around a coherent thesis statement that demonstrates a command of standard English?

Tool 7: Needs Assessment Management Plan

Purpose: To help you develop an action plan for organizing your needs assessment activities.

Materials: Pens and several copies of the plan for all participants.

Directions:
1. Write in an area of focus (results from Tool 5) for your comprehensive school reform.
2. For each element, develop at least two guiding questions (use Tool 6 to help you).
3. Decide how, when and by whom the data will be collected, analyzed, summarized and presented.
4. Include how you will involve stakeholders in the process of data collection and analysis.

Area Of Focus:

Element: Student Demographics and Achievement

Student Demographics

Guiding Questions
1.
2.

Data Collection:
Who Is Responsible:
Sources & Methods:
Completion Date:

Data Analysis
Who Is Responsible:
Sources & Methods:
Completion Date:

Data Summary and Presentation
Who Is Responsible:
To Whom:
Sources & Methods:
Completion Date:

Student Achievement

Guiding Questions
1.
2.

Data Collection
Who Is Responsible:
Sources & Methods:
Completion Date:

Data Analysis
Who Is Responsible:
Sources & Methods:
Completion Date:

Data Summary and Presentation
Who Is Responsible:
To Whom:
Sources & Methods:
Completion Date:

Element: Classroom Processes and Support

Curriculum and Instruction

Guiding Questions 1. 2.
Data Collection Who Is Responsible: Sources & Methods: Completion Date:
Data Analysis Who Is Responsible: How Completion Date:
Data Summary and Presentation Who Is Responsible: To Whom: Sources & Methods: Completion Date:

Assessment

Guiding Questions 1. 2.
Data Collection Who Is Responsible: Sources & Methods: Completion Date:
Data Analysis Who Is Responsible: Sources & Methods: Completion Date:
Data Summary and Presentation Who Is Responsible: To Whom: Sources & Methods: Completion Date:

Element: Classroom Processes and Support

Professional Development	*Guiding Questions* 1. 2.
	Data Collection Who Is Responsible: Sources & Methods: Completion Date:
	Data Analysis Who Is Responsible: Sources & Methods: Completion Date:
	Data Summary and Presentation Who Is Responsible: To Whom: Sources & Methods: Completion Date:

Classroom Management	*Guiding Questions* 1. 2.
	Data Collection Who Is Responsible: Sources & Methods: Completion Date:
	Data Analysis Who Is Responsible: Sources & Methods: Completion Date:
	Data Summary and Presentation Who Is Responsible: To Whom: Sources & Methods: Completion Date:

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Element: School Management and Resources

School Management	*Guiding Questions* 1. 2.
	Data Collection Who Is Responsible: Sources & Methods: Completion Date:
	Data Analysis Who Is Responsible: Sources & Methods: Completion Date:
	Data Summary and Presentation Who Is Responsible: To Whom: Sources & Methods: Completion Date:

Family and Community Involvement	*Guiding Questions* 1. 2.
	Data Collection Who Is Responsible: Sources & Methods: Completion Date:
	Data Analysis Who Is Responsible: Sources & Methods: Completion Date:
	Data Summary and Presentation Who Is Responsible: To Whom: Sources & Methods: Completion Date:

Element: School Management and Resources

Technology	*Guiding Questions* 1. 2.
	Data Collection Who Is Responsible: Sources & Methods: Completion Date:
	Data Analysis Who Is Responsible: Sources & Methods: Completion Date:
	Data Summary And Presentation Who Is Responsible: To Whom: Sources & Methods: Completion Date:

Tool 8: Data Sources Checklist

Purpose: To identify different sources from which you can collect data for your comprehensive needs assessment.

Directions:
1. Below each element of the needs assessment are listed data types related to that element. Next to each are examples of possible indicators. Review the list and check off the data types you will collect.
2. Check the *Sources of Information* table at the end of this tool to get ideas for where to collect the data. Indicate any other sources you may know about.

Data Types and Possible Indicators

Element: Student Demographics and Achievement

Student Demographics	**Possible Indicators**
☐ Enrollment	• Total number of registered students. • Number of students in special programs (e.g., Title I, LEP, gifted and talented) broken down by category. • Number of students broken down by ethnicity, language group or other meaningful categories.
☐ Daily Attendance	• Average daily attendance of students by grade, grade span, whole school, or other enrollment category. • Percent of students tardy for classes. • Number of students who have been absent from school 21 days or more.
☐ Mobility/Stability	• Mobility rate: the percent of children who move in and out of a school during a year. • Stability rate: the percent of students who remain in the same building for the entire year.
☐ Socioeconomic Status (SES)	• Percent of students receiving free- or reduced-price lunch. • Average level of parents' education and/or household income. • Unemployment rates in the attendance area.
☐ Student Behavior	• Number or percentage of discipline referrals or incidents. • Number or percentage of student suspensions and expulsions. • Frequency of gang related, substance abuse, or other at-risk behavior.
☐ Student Attitudes	• Student attitudes toward school analyzed and reported by content or other area.
☐ Limited English Proficiency	• Percent of students with limited English proficiency. • Percent of families who speak English as a second language.

Student Achievement	**Possible Indicators**
☐ Academic Performance	• State or local testing (norm-referenced or criterion-referenced tests). • Performance assessments and/or classroom assessments. • Grades. • Writing samples.

☐ Completion Rates	• Graduation/promotion rate, retention rates, percentage of dropouts.
☐ Multi-year Trends	• Longitudinal academic performance data.
☐ Comparative Data	• Comparative performance of low-income students versus other students at the school (or other meaningful categories). • Comparative performance school or sub-groups of student at the state and federal levels.
☐ Post Secondary	• Number or percent of students attending and/or completing post-secondary schools. • Number or percent of students accepted in the armed services. • Number and location of students who directly enter the work force.

Element: Classroom Processes and Support

Curriculum and Instruction	**Possible Indicators**
☐ Instructional Program	• Assessment of the school by staff regarding the attributes of effective schooling. • Amount of planning time scheduled during school day.
☐ Instructional Effectiveness	• The number, quality, variety and type of instructional strategies and techniques used by staff. • Appreciation and awareness of different learning styles in the classroom.
☐ Curriculum Materials	• The amount and quality (i.e., age, condition and variety) of instructional materials. • The extent to which available materials are consistent with state and district content standards.
☐ Support Personnel	• Use of paraprofessionals and special program staff. • Frequency of collaboration among instructional staff

Assessment	**Possible Indicators**
☐ Assessment Tools	• The number, quality, variety and type of assessment tools and strategies used by staff.
☐ Assessment Databases	• Number and type of student assessment records for current students. • Number and type of student assessment records for graduated students.
☐ Purpose	• The extent to which assessments are aligned with state and district content standards. • The extent to which assessment is tied to instructional strategies used by staff.

Professional Development	**Possible Indicators**
☐ Coherence	• Existence of district- and school-level professional development plan. • Funds available for professional development. • Registration and/or selection procedures for professional development opportunities.

☐ Alignment	• Percentage of teacher-initiated professional development. • Number of professional development opportunities designed to address standards and curriculum.
☐ Methods and Activities	• Description of types of professional development activities. • Number and type of professional journals or books available at school. • Number of faculty that actively mentors other staff.
☐ Schedule	• Number of professional days or district resources dedicated to professional development.

Classroom Management	**Possible Indicators**
☐ Standards/ Expectations	• Learning activity plans indicate how standards of behavior are taught.
☐ Instructional Style	• Lesson plans indicate strategies that address different learning styles. • Lesson plans indicate strategies that address different cultural backgrounds.
☐ Classroom Organization	• Lesson plans describe student grouping arrangements.

Element: School Management and Resources

School Management	**Possible Indicators:**
☐ Class Size	• Average instructional staff/student ratio computed by grade level or grade span. • Composition of students in the largest classes, the smallest classes and the average sized classes.
☐ Coordination Plan	• Description of the activities conducted to ensure that students' instructional day or program is coordinated so students do not participate in fragmented instruction.
☐ Governance	• The presence of school-site councils, teacher input into decision-making, the organization of teachers by teams.
☐ Discipline Policy	• Clearly defined and articulated student management and discipline policy.
☐ School Philosophy	• Statement of the underlying philosophy of the school.
☐ School Mission	• Statement of the underlying purpose of the school.
☐ Content and Performance Standards	• Method by which content and performance standards are communicated to the community, teachers, parents and students about what students can and should learn.
☐ Behavior standards	• Description of behavior standards in student and parent handbooks.
☐ School Climate	• The quality of student-teacher interactions, student attitudes towards school, teacher job satisfaction, teacher expectations and beliefs about what students can accomplish. • Safety of students and teachers. • Perceptions of parents, students and community members.

Family / Community Involvement	**Possible Indicators**
☐ Types of Involvement	• Frequency of parent visits to school. • Purposes for which parents visit the school (e.g., volunteering, learning, advocacy, decision making).
☐ Communication with Parents	• Amount and frequency of information disseminated to parents. • Languages in which the documents are written. • Feedback from parents about information provided by school.
☐ Parent Input	• Amount and frequency of opportunity for involvement in decision-making. • Number of parents represented on school site councils. • Background of parents most frequently involved in school.
☐ Parent Education	• The number of education activities provided. • Parent workshop evaluations. • Evidence of teachers trained in parent involvement.

Technology	**Possible Indicators**
☐ Types	• Inventories of the current working audio, visual, computer and multimedia technology resources (e.g., televisions, computers, software, cassette players).
☐ Access	• Location of the technology resources (e.g., classroom, laboratory, media center, storage closet). • Times the resources are available to staff and students (e.g., during class, after school, during free periods or planning periods).
☐ Use	• Ways in which technology is used (e.g., instruction, assessment, record keeping, games). • Frequency of use of technology by staff and students for the purposes of instruction, assessment, record keeping, data analysis.
☐ Training	• Number or percentage of staff trained to use technology resources. • Dates and length of training opportunities.

Sources of Information

District/School Files	*Teaching/Learning or Classroom Instruction*	*Records*	*People*	*Other*
✓ School Plans	✓ Curriculum and Assessment Materials	✓ School Records	✓ Instructional Staff	✓
✓ Budget	✓ Lesson Plans	✓ District Records	✓ Non-instructional Staff	✓
✓ Technology Plans	✓ Student Work	✓ School Calendar	✓ Families/Students	✓
✓ Evaluations & Other Reports	✓ School Reports	✓ Minutes of Faculty Meetings	✓ Newspaper Articles	✓
	✓ Observation Reports	✓ Minutes of Parent Association Meetings	✓ Real Estate Analysis	✓
	✓ Checklists		✓ Other Community Based Information/Reports	✓

Tool 9: Data Collection Matrix

Purpose: To help you organize your needs assessment, identify sources of information and methods of collection, and identify gaps.

Materials: Chart paper, tape, markers, enough copies of this worksheet for each participant.

Directions:

1. Duplicate a "life-sized" version of this document on chart paper.
2. In the various cells or "boxes", list the sources of information you already have on hand (e.g., student achievement data, results from a parent survey (results from Tools 7 and 8 may help in this).
3. Fill in information you still need to collect. Perhaps use a different color ink to discern from information you filled in for #2 above.
4. Examine each element to make sure that you have complete coverage of all aspects of your school.
5. Use the *Data Sources Checklist* tool to help stimulate ideas about the most appropriate source of information.
6. Remember that you will need multiple sources of information to adequately cover each element. Using different methods to collect information will add depth and breadth to your data. For example, a group discussion with a representative group of parents can cover one topic in greater depth while a questionnaire mailed to all parents can cover a greater breadth of topics.

Element: Student Demographics and Achievement

	METHODS OF COLLECTION						
	Self-Assessments	Observations	Interviews/Group Discussions	Surveys/Polls	Reports and Evaluations	Document Reviews	Other
Student Demographics							
Student Achievement							

Element: Classroom Processes and Support

	METHODS OF COLLECTION						
	Self-Assessments	Observations	Interviews/Group Discussions	Surveys/Polls	Reports and Evaluations	Document Reviews	Other
Curriculum and Instruction							
Assessment							
Professional Development							
Classroom Management							

Element: School Management and Resources

	METHODS OF COLLECTION						
	Self-Assessments	Observations	Interviews/Group Discussions	Surveys/Polls	Reports and Evaluations	Document Reviews	Other
School Management							
Family and Community Involvement							
Technology							

Tool 10: Crafting Needs Statements

Purpose: To develop clear needs statements based on the information you have gathered that will shape your goals for school-wide reform.

Materials: Several copies of the data summary sheet (attached), various data sources, chart paper, markers, pens.

Directions: Step 1: Complete the sample data summary sheet using the various data sources you have. Be as complete as possible. Think about other possible summary tables you can create. For example, after completing the sample data summary sheet, you may notice that girls in grades 4 through 6 are underachieving in mathematics. You could create another data summary table wherein you break out the girls by ethnicity to see if a pattern emerges.

Step 2: Write data summary statements based on the data you laid out in the summary sheets. As you review the data, ask yourself the following questions:

- Which student sub-groups appear to need priority assistance, as determined by test scores, grades, or other assessments? Consider sub-groups by grade level, ethnicity, gender, language background (proficiency and/or home language), categorical program (e.g., migrant, special education), economic status, classroom assignment, years at our school, attendance.
- In which subject areas do students appear to need the most improvement? (Also consider English Language Development)
- In which subject areas do the "below proficient" student sub-groups need the most assistance?
- What evidence do you have to support your findings?
- Consider creating additional summary tables as described in the example in step 1 in order to understand some of your results.

Examples:

- Fourth-grade Vietnamese immigrant boys are underachieving in science.
- Our highly mobile Migrant students appear to need assistance in social studies.
- Our junior and senior girls are having difficulty in math.

Step 3: For each of the data summary statements, brainstorm all the possible reasons why the data show what they do. For each reason you list, identify data or facts that support your assertion. If no data exist, determine how you will find data to support the assertion. Continue asking "why" until you are satisfied that you are at the root cause of your problem or need.

Example:

- Data summary statement: Fourth-grade Vietnamese immigrant boys are underachieving in science.
- Evidence: achievement scores, teacher observation, and chapter (textbook) tests.
- Why do fourth-grade Vietnamese immigrant boys underachieve in science?
  - → They have difficulty with English language (Supporting data or facts: language assessment)
  - Why does the fact that Vietnamese boys have difficulty with English contribute to low performance in science?
    - → They have difficulty understanding the concepts and applying them in practice. (Supporting data or facts: observation and student input)
- Why do fourth-grade Vietnamese immigrant boys underachieve in science?
  - → Curriculum does not match assessment (Supporting data or facts: curriculum is based on 1985 framework, assessment is based on 1995 framework)
  - Why does the fact that the curriculum does not match assessment contribute to the low performance in boys?
    - → There is mis-alignment between what is taught and what is being assessed (Supporting data or facts: comparison of 1985 and 1995 frameworks). Upon further examination all students are having some difficulty in science.

Step 1: Complete Data Summary Sheets

Data Type: _____
(e.g., enrollment, student achievement total, attendance, student achievement reading)

Data Source/Measure: _____
(e.g., SAT9, school records, staff survey)

What the Numbers Represent: _____
(e.g., # students below grade level; # students scoring higher than 4 on district math assessment; % students that like to read)

Student Characteristic	Grade Levels													Total
Ethnicity														
African-American														
Asian/Pacific Islndr														
Caucasian														
Hispanic														
Native American														
Other														
Gender														
Male														
Female														
Income														
Low Income														
Not Low Income														
Language Ability														
Fully Proficient														
Limited Proficient														
Non-Proficient														
English Only														
Special Populations														
Migrant														
Title I Target Assist														
Special Education														
Preschool														
After school														
Other														
Other														

Step 2: Write Data Summary Statements (see examples provided in directions)

Data summary statements . . .
- . . . *DO* build on strengths
- . . . *DON'T* offer solutions
- . . . *DON'T* describe a cause or lay blame
- . . . *DON'T* include wishes or wants
- . . . *DO* focus on student achievement

✓	✓
✓	✓
✓	✓
✓	✓
✓	✓
✓	✓
✓	✓
✓	✓

Step 3: Find Root Causes (see example provided in directions)

Data Summary Statement: _____

Evidence:

- ❑ _____
- ❑ _____
- ❑ _____
- ❑ _____

Why?	Supporting Data or Facts
→ → → → →	• • • • •
→ → → → →	• • • • •
→ → → → →	• • • • •
→ → → → →	• • • • •

Tool 11: Moving from Needs to Goals

Purpose: To develop goals based on your identified needs.

Materials: List of needs statements or data summary statements developed using tool 10 or other method.

Directions:
1. Ensure you have clearly defined need statements or data summary statements.
2. Transform each need statement into a student/program goal. Use the model below. Examples are provided.

Student Goal Model:

Students in grades 2 through 5 will OBJECTIVE as measured by OUTCOME INDICATOR. Current results indicate that BASELINE. At the end of TIMEFRAME, students in these grades will be performing at TARGET STANDARD OR PERFORMANCE, and at the end of two years, they will be performing at TARGET STANDARD or PERFORMANCE.

Example:
Need Statement: Almost all of our upper-elementary students are under-performing in language arts.
Student Goal: Our upper-elementary students will improve their language arts skills (objective) as measured by the district assessment and standardized test (outcome indicator). Current results indicate that 67% of students in grades 4-6 are "below proficient" (baseline). By Spring 2001 (timeframe), 25% of students currently under-achieving in language arts–particularly those in upper elementary–will improve their literacy skills by moving from "below proficient" to "proficient" (target standard or performance).

Program Goal Model:

Current records show that BASELINE teachers participated in professional development activities offered by our school this year. By TIMEFRAME, our school will OBJECTIVE as measured by OUTCOME INDICATOR. As a result, teachers will be offering TARGET INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE to these students. At the end of the second year, staff will OBJECTIVE as measured by OUTCOME INDICATOR. As a result, students will be performing at TARGET STANDARD OR PERFORMANCE.

Example:
Need Statement: Our lowest-performing students in Language Arts are African-American, particularly males.
Program Goal: By the end of the 2000-2001 school year (timeframe), all staff will have learned about effective instructional practices that accelerate the academic achievement of African-American males (objective). Currently, only 5% of staff have these skills (baseline). The following year (timeframe), all staff will have implemented new strategies (target instructional practice) as measured by peer coaching and classroom observations (outcome indicator).

Transform each needs statement you have developed into a student or program goal. Be sure to include:

- ❑ Objective
- ❑ Outcome indicator
- ❑ Baseline
- ❑ Timeframe
- ❑ Target standard or performance
- ❑ Target instructional practice

Need Statement: _____

Student or Program Goal: _____

Need Statement: _____

Student or Program Goal: _____

Need Statement: _____

Student or Program Goal: _____

Tool 12: Determining Evidence of Effectiveness

Purpose: To determine the evidence of effectiveness of the various models you are considering for implementation.

Materials: Several copies of this tool, enough to complete a matrix for each model under consideration.

Directions:
1. Review the *Continuum of Evidence of Effectiveness* (attached).
2. For each model you are considering for implementation, determine how rigorous it is in each of the four dimensions of the continuum.
3. List any additional questions that are raised.
4. Examples of how schools can use this tool are in the *Resources* section of this guide.

Model under consideration: _____

	Most Rigorous	**Somewhat Rigorous**	**Marginal**
Theory/ Research Foundation			
Evaluation-based Evidence of Effectiveness			
Implementation			
Replicability			

Additional Questions: _____

Continuum of Evidence of Effectiveness

Most Rigorous	Somewhat Rigorous	Marginal
Theory/Research Foundation		
Does the model explain the theory behind its design, including references to scientific literature, that elucidate why the model improves student achievement?	Does the model state the theory behind its design, explaining how the model's components reinforce one another to improve student achievement?	Does the model explain the theory behind its design?
Evaluation-based Evidence of Effectiveness		
Have student achievement gains been shown using experimental and control groups created through either large-scale random assignment or carefully matched comparison groups?	Have student achievement gains been shown using between or within-school comparisons?	Have student achievement gains been shown for a single school?
Has the model produced educationally significant pre- and post-intervention student achievement gains, as reliably measured using appropriate assessments?	Has the model reproduced student achievement gains relative to district means or other comparison groups, using appropriate assessment instruments?	Has the model produced improvements on other indicators of student performance e.g. student attendance, graduation rates, or student engagement?
Have the student achievement gains been sustained for three or more years?	Have the student achievement gains been sustained for one or two years?	Have other indicators of improved student performance been sustained for one or two years?
Have the student achievement gains been confirmed through independent, third-party evaluation?	Has a State, district, or school evaluation team evaluated the model?	Have its developers evaluated the model?
Implementation		
Has the model been fully implemented in multiple sites for more than three years?	Has the model been fully implemented in the original site(s) for more than three years?	Has the model been fully implemented in the original pilot site(s) for a minimum of one year?
Is documentation available that clearly specified the model's implementation requirements and procedures, including staff development, curriculum, instructional methods, materials, assessments, and costs?	Is documentation available that attempts to describe the implementation requirements of the model, including staff development, curriculum, instruction methods, materials, and assessments?	Is documentation available that provides a general description of the program's requirements?

Most Rigorous	Somewhat Rigorous	Marginal
Are the costs of full implementation clearly specific, including whether or not the costs of materials, staff development, additional personnel, etc., are included in the program's purchase price?	Have the costs of full implementation been estimated, including whether or not the costs of materials, staff development, additional personnel, etc., are included in the program's purchase price?	Is documentation available that provides general information about the program's costs?
Has the model been implemented in schools with characteristics similar to the target school: same grade levels, similar size, similar poverty levels, similar student demographics, such as racial, ethnic, and language minority composition?	Has the model been successfully implemented in at least one school with characteristics similar to the target school?	Is information on grade level, size, student demographics, poverty level, and racial, ethnic and language minority concentration available for the schools where the model has been implemented?
Replicability		
Has the model been replicated successfully in a wide range of schools and districts, e.g., urban, rural, suburban?	Has the model been replicated in a number of schools or districts representing diverse settings?	Is full replication of the model being initiated in several schools?
Have the replication sites have been evaluated, demonstrating significant student achievement gains comparable to those achieved in the pilot site(s)?	Have some replication sites been evaluated, demonstrating positive gains in student achievement?	Are promising initial results available from the replication sites?

Tool 13: Comparison of Options

Purpose: To help you compare the various models you are considering for implementation and guide you to an informed decision about which model is best for your needs.

Materials: Several copies of this tool, enough to complete a worksheet for each model under consideration.

Directions:

1. Complete a worksheet for each model you are considering for implementation.
2. List any additional questions that are raised.
3. Present this information to your school community; gather input and additional information as needed.
4. There are many other tools, activities and resources that can guide in your decision about which model to choose. Most are referenced in this guide. Use this tool in combination with some of the others to support your decision-making.

Model under consideration: _____

Key Information to Compare	This Model's Information
Needs addressed	
Fit with overall comprehensive school reform program	
Goal	
Key features	
Grade level	
Target population	
Curricular focus	
Curriculum	

Key Information to Compare	This Model's Information
Instructional approach(es)	
Assessment	
Professional development	
School management	
Family and community involvement	
Evaluation/ evidence of effectiveness	
Comprehensiveness of the model	
Level of support provided	
Implementation requirements	
Costs	
Length of commitment	
Staff requirements	

Additional Questions:

Tool 14: Reallocating Resources

Purpose: To determine how to best reallocate your resources to meet your school's identified needs and improvement goals, and to implement your school reform program.

Materials: Several copies of this worksheet as needed.

Directions: Step 1: Think as broadly as possible and take stock of the resources you have on hand (i.e., funds, staff, time, materials).
Step 2: List in order of priority all your improvement strategies (the components you plan to implement). Next to each, list the resources you will need to be able to implement that strategy. In the third column, list the existing sources you have that can fill that need. Be creative in how you reallocate resources.
Step 3: Identify any gaps in your resources and generate ideas/strategies for filling those gaps.
Step 4: You may need to go through this activity several times, as you try different configurations of your resources.

Step 1: Take stock of your resources

Funds	Staff	Time	Materials

143

144

Step 2: List your improvement strategies, in order of priority

Strategy to Implement	Resources Needed	Existing Sources

Step 3: Identify gaps in your resources

Resource Gap	Alternative Source or Strategy to Obtain

Tool 15: Action Plan Template

Purpose: To create a "script" for your improvement effort and support implementation.

Materials: Poster paper, pens, multiple copies of this template.

Directions: 1. Using this form as a template, develop an action plan for each goal identified through the needs assessment process. Modify the form as needed to fit your unique context.
2. Copy the action plan on to poster board and display in a central area.
3. Keep copies handy to bring to meetings to review and update regularly. You may decide to develop new action plans for new phases of your reform effort.

Goal

Improvement Strategies

Tasks/Action Steps *What Will Be Done?*	**Responsibilities** *Who Will Do It?*	**Resources** *(Funding/Time/People/Materials)*	**Timeline** *By When? (Day/Month)*
1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.	5.

Implications For Professional Development

Implications For Family Involvement

Evidence Of Success *(How will you know that you are making progress? What are your benchmarks?)*

Evaluation Process *(How will you determine that your goal has been reached? What are your measures?)*

Continuous Improvement Plans
(Action plan review and update)

Results/Accomplishments	*Next Steps*	*Date*
Results/Accomplishments	*Next Steps*	*Date*
Results/Accomplishments	*Next Steps*	*Date*
Results/Accomplishments	*Next Steps*	*Date*

Successful School Profiles

Alton Elementary School

Avery County High School

Central Park East Secondary School

Hawthorne Elementary School

King Middle School

Longfellow Elementary School

Harriet Tubman Learning Center

Alton Elementary School
Memphis City School District
Memphis, Tennessee

Demographic Profile

- ✓ Grades Served: K-4
- ✓ Enrollment: 693
- ✓ Ethnic Make-up: 100% African-American
- ✓ Free or Reduced-price Lunch: 91%
- ✓ Mobility Rate: 20%

The School Community

Alton Elementary School serves the downtown Memphis, Tennessee community of Longview Heights. Residents in the neighborhood have moderate to low incomes, and the majority of students live in non-traditional family situations (only twenty-five percent live with both parents). Forty percent of the community's kindergarten children have attended a Head Start program, and before- and after-school programs serve one in five children. The service industry is a primary source of employment in Longview Heights, although unemployment is as high as twenty-one percent. Student mobility in the district is also high: each year, the student population decreases by about one-fifth between initial fall enrollment and the end of school.

In 1994-95, due to its high percentage of low-income students, Alton Elementary became a schoolwide Title I school. In the same year, New American Schools (NAS) identified Memphis as one of ten districts targeted for expansion of comprehensive reform models, and the district Superintendent encouraged schools to learn more about the NAS designs and other models. Schools whose faculty and parents expressed interest in pursuing comprehensive reform were asked to submit letters of intent to the district. Alton was one of the first schools to respond, selecting the Co-NECT design.

Alton's principal since 1988, Virginia McNeil, describes Alton as "a unique school shaped by its own special history, culture, and resources. It shares a common framework for results-oriented reform." McNeil is a visionary leader, who believes in shared decision-making and inspires trust from her teachers. Under her leadership the school has created a new environment focused on active learning, literacy, teamwork, and staff development.

What They've Accomplished

In a short four years Alton Elementary School has increased student

achievement, improved curriculum and instruction, and been recognized for its success with numerous distinctions. This recognition includes the following:

- ✓ Site Visitations from the International Congress of World Class Schools (ICESI)
- ✓ Selection by IBM as a Digital Portfolio/Reinventing Education Pilot School
- ✓ Named Danforth Principals Academy School
- ✓ Named Denver Herald and USA Today "School Reform" Contributor
- ✓ Became a participant/developer for principal/teacher involvement in the national Science, Engineering, and Mathematics Collaborative
- ✓ Received 1998 Co-NECT Star Search Award for Improved Achievement and the Implementation of the Co-NECT Design
- ✓ Selected by the State of Tennessee as one of the original fourteen 21st Century Classroom Schools, a program to assist educators in the use of existing and emerging technologies in support of the learning environment

Before reform began in 1995, Alton was not making as much progress as other Memphis schools in improving scores on the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS). In 1994, just six percent of Alton's students scored *proficient* in the state's writing test. Following the adoption of the new curriculum in 1995, however, Alton made significant gains: the number of *proficient* students in writing rose from 20 percent in 1996 to 30 percent in 1997, and 45 percent in 1998.

Virginia McNeil states that a recent research study conducted by Steven Ross from the University of Memphis "just confirms what we've learned first hand: using a redesign model can transform teaching and learning at a school and, as a result, help improve test scores. Redesign is hard work, but it's worth it." In fact, by 1997, after two years of implementation, the research showed that gains were significantly greater at the schools chosen to implement reforms than at those not using reform strategies. A 1998 study showed that this positive gain continued. District-wide, the six Co-NECT schools in Memphis showed impressive gains relative to other schools on a national norm-referenced exam. Furthermore, the schools in Memphis implementing reform models outperformed other Memphis schools on the state assessment, and scored above the average for all Tennessee schools.

Before the reform, most teachers were lecturing their students, desks were set up in rows, and homework consisted mostly of worksheets. Since 1995, there has been a notable change in instruction: classrooms are arranged with clusters of tables and networked computers, around which students are engaged in hands-on projects and group work. In addition, according to Alton's principal "student attendance has remained constant and disciplinary referrals that were not many in the beginning are even less now."

How They Did It

After researching the different school-wide reform approaches and using data to drive their decisions, Alton staff chose Co-NECT (Cooperative Networked Educational Community for Tomorrow), a NAS model that emphasizes technology, multi-age grouping, and project-based learning. The school

chose Co-NECT for its non-traditional, innovative strategies and its method of developing higher level thinking skills. Staff members like how integrating technology tools into the curriculum allows "teachers and students to interact with resourceful people and places on a national and worldwide level as well as a local level via the Internet" (School Web site).

Under the strong leadership of the Principal, Superintendent, and Assistant Principal, teachers prepared for reform by planning collaboratively, discussing different research articles, bringing in speakers and weighing their options. Teachers have visited other Co-NECT schools outside Memphis. Debra Gunn, the Critical Friends coordinator indicated that they also meet regularly with seven Co-NECT schools in the district to help each other see how "to make everything that we're doing work for us to achieve district and state expectations for reading and math."

To guide its reform efforts the school established a vision to do the following:

- Prepare the "Alton Scholars" for responsible citizenship, productive employment, and a love of life-long learning.
- Structure a teaching and learning environment that will produce well-informed, cooperative, analytical, technologically literate, environmentally aware, and caring students.
- Use the support of parents, community agencies, business adopters, and volunteers to assist our students with the technological production, storage, usage, and retrieval of information.
- Construct curriculum projects that will move our students from ditto sheets and chalkboards to computer screens and distant voyages through digitized space" (Principal Virginia McNeil).

Next, the school established a design team comprised of the principal, guidance counselor, Title I facilitator, School Leadership Council chair, and several teachers to faithfully implement the Co-NECT model. This design team developed the School Improvement Plan, which details specific strategies with start and completion dates. For instance, they committed to use digital portfolio technology for oral, written, and video presentations; to provide dictionaries and thesauri for students in grades 3-4 to help increase word recognition and vocabulary; and to engage the children in learning activities such as building, drawing, writing, discussing, reading, researching, and making excursions. This plan also outlines the resources needed to achieve the objectives and how progress will be monitored.

The design team uses student test data, teacher input, and its own observations to plan an instructional program that will enable students to achieve the state standards. Based upon the goals in the School Improvement Plan, teachers then target course work to improve student skills, knowledge and achievement.

Teaching tied to professional development. Principal McNeil identifies increased teacher collaboration as a direct influence on improved student learning and better classroom instruction. Before the reform, teachers developed their lesson plans independently; now they do this work together, sharing their ideas and expertise.

In accordance with the Co-NECT model, teachers are organized into five working teams, or "clusters." Each cluster elects a chairperson and meets weekly to develop and evaluate curriculum. They focus on planning interdisciplinary projects that meet the needs of students in a multi-age setting. By paying careful attention to students' evolving knowledge of their subjects (reading, math, and others), teachers group their students by ability and instructional need rather than by grade level. Thus, each student is taught by more than one teacher throughout the day.

Learning is ongoing for teachers and administrators at Alton. During the school year, weekly Co-NECT cluster meetings foster collegiality. Over the summer, all teachers participated in a weeklong, forty-hour Co-NECT workshop, which helps them implement the reform model. In addition, fourteen teachers were part of a pilot program that augments the 21st Century classroom training provided by the Memphis City Schools. The training allows teachers to explore new methods of facilitating the transfer of technology from teacher to student and is coordinated with BBN Systems and Technology (Cambridge, MA) to support implementation of Co-NECT. Lastly, many teachers have traveled to Co-NECT schools in other cities as "critical friends" to evaluate or recommend refinements to other local school implementation efforts.

Curriculum and assessment. Project-based learning is the most important component of Co-NECT. Teachers facilitate student selection and creation of projects that use investigative approaches to learning like questioning; researching; and collecting, analyzing, and reporting data. At the culmination of each project, students share and display tangible end products.

Meanwhile, the Alton school technology coordinator works with teachers and students to integrate technology into classroom instruction. Each classroom has three computer stations and at least one Internet connection so students can create multimedia projects. The school has a fully equipped television/video design studio, two computer laboratories, and a science lab with a Global Positioning System (GPS) that links up with six satellites. Alton also offers a unique interdisciplinary project called Kids 'N' Blues where students produce an audio CD of their own original musical material and give a performance. Through Kids 'N' Blues Alton's elementary students collaborate with high school students to create a high-quality, substantive product.

Other strategies and activities at Alton include: a sustained silent reading time block every morning; use of current and research-based strategies to address the multiple intelligences; and the Sing, Spell, Read and Write Program in kindergarten emphasizing phonemic awareness and alphabet knowledge.

Methods used to evaluate student performance include C-STEEP Performance Assessments, teacher-made rubrics and tests, standardized tests, report cards, parent/teacher conferences, and student portfolios, journals and video presentations.

Maximizing resources. Title I funds are used school-wide to support the comprehensive reform effort at Alton. The school has also utilized state funds as a 21st Century Classroom School

(not to be confused with the Federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grants) to further its reform goals and use of technology. Furthermore, Alton school has received a number of grants through Goals 2000 and other programs to continue and expand their efforts to improve student academic performance. The Bell-South Foundation provided an award to the Co-NECT schools to fund the Kids-N-Blues project. By combining these resources, the school has been able to provide ongoing staff development, improved Internet access, regular testing for multiple grades, and other activities important to implementing the Co-NECT model and the school's broader reform program.

Parent and community involvement. Community support comes from many organizations, ranging from the International Paper Corporation and Rotary Foundation, to the American Red Cross. These organizations provide tutors, trophies, honor roll certificates, holiday baskets, and special programs or concerts.

Overall, the Alton community rates the school climate as excellent. On an informal survey parents/guardians indicated that the school provides a safe environment and a facility conducive to learning. Alton has a small PTA that hosts events aimed at improving homework activities and communicates principles and goals of Co-NECT to the community at large. However, the school sees parent involvement as an area for improvement and has begun using a number of techniques to reach out to them. For instance, the Homework Hotline and Lesson Line give students or their parents/guardians the opportunity to call the school after hours to ask questions and get extra help.

How They Maintain Their Success

As a Co-NECT school, Alton focuses on five key areas for reform, identifying clear benchmarks to guide progress. These areas include

- ✓ teamwork focused on results,
- ✓ project-based teaching and learning,
- ✓ comprehensive assessment,
- ✓ school organization, and
- ✓ technology.

Co-NECT brings peer evaluators called Critical Friends to help Alton maintain its high standards and continuously improve. These evaluators are experienced practitioners who visit the school and help staff identify their program strengths and challenges. A current Critical Friends report on Alton recognizes the following strengths:

- ✓ The administration and faculty share, model, and use what they have learned in their outside staff development.
- ✓ Teaching and learning are student-centered. Teachers effectively structure the learning environment.
- ✓ Some of the students are involved in assessment through peer editing and creating rubrics.
- ✓ Teachers have input in decision-making regarding grouping and class assignments.
- ✓ Computers are used to reinforce a broad base of curriculum; to individualize instruction; and as a reference and research tool for problem solving and for product presentation.

In addition to feedback from Critical Friends, the Co-NECT school team

examines student data and updates the School Improvement Plan (SIP) in line with the school's goal to "ensure that all children learn and perform at high levels" and the school's philosophy of interdisciplinary, project-based learning. This ongoing collaborative work, focused on clear goals and involving many important stakeholders, keeps Alton on track in helping its students "to develop knowledge and to grow in understanding of the world beyond the walls of school." (Alton SIP, 1998-99)

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Avery County High School
Avery County School District
Newland, North Carolina

Demographic Profile

- ✓ Grades Served: 9-12
- ✓ Enrollment: 673
- ✓ Ethnic Makeup: 98% Caucasian, 1% African-American, 1% Latino
- ✓ Free or Reduced-price Lunch: 49%
- ✓ Mobility Rate: 13%

The School Community

Located in the rugged mountains of northwestern North Carolina, the only high school in rural Avery County, enrolls 673 students (grades 9-12). The primary sources of income for the county's 15,000 year-round residents are Christmas tree farming, nurseries, and tourism, resulting in a per capita income of approximately $12,000 per year. The students at Avery are mostly Caucasian. Half of them qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. Approximately 30% of students have been identified as needing additional academic assistance.

What They've Accomplished

Avery County High School has been engaged in reform for nearly a decade. Since 1990, they have increased the number of students performing at grade level, raised standardized test scores, and increased the number of students following college prep or college technical prep programs of study. For the last two years Avery County High achieved "exemplary" status under the state's accountability program, with 61% of students at or above grade level in 1998 and 65% in 1999. Avery's students improved on both the SAT and the North Carolina End of Course Exams. While raising SAT scores, the high school also increased the number of students taking the SAT. In 1996 with 28 percent taking the SAT, Avery students' average combined score of 1071 was above both the state and national averages of 976 and 1013, respectively. By 1998, the number of students taking the SAT nearly doubled to 50 percent, and they maintained an average combined score above the national average. "The key point in Avery High's reform effort," former principal Steve Sneed says, "is that we raised expectations."

Since joining High Schools That Work (HSTW) in 1995, Avery has scored at the very top on the HSTW assessment, which uses National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) items. Avery is also one of only two HSTW sites to meet all of the program's performance goals. Most recently, they were recognized by HSTW as a high

performing school willing to share its expertise.

How They Did It

Needs assessment. In 1987, the curriculum at Avery High School, the former principal recalls, was a "smorgasbord." He explains:

> Kids went in and picked the easiest courses they could find. They chose the path of least resistance. I had talked to the staff about curriculum, emphasizing the 'standard course of study.' Then I had a teacher come into my office and tell me, 'There's no way with the kids in my class that I can begin to teach the standard course of study.' There were so many students who couldn't even read, who were far below grade level.

He continues, "when we began to look at what got us in this state we found a pattern of social promotion beginning in the early grades." The first thing the principal did was appeal to the elementary school, asking them to be "cognizant of the grief and hardship [this pattern] created" for both the students and the rest of the school system. At that time, the state of North Carolina began development of an accountability system and promotion standards, which took almost a decade to refine. When Avery's leaders began to look for ways to raise student achievement, Richmond County High School, another North Carolina school, was gaining attention in the state for starting the Tech Prep Program. With federal money available and opportunities to network with other counties in the state using the program, Tech Prep was a good match for Avery.

The Tech Prep Program. This four-year planned sequence of study for a technical field spans two years of high school and two more years of post-secondary occupational or apprenticeship education. Through Tech Prep, Avery formed a three-county consortium with Mayland Community College; thus their high school students can earn Mayland credits for some of their Tech Prep work. Workforce Development Coordinator John Grice explains that the goal is to serve the students who typically "fall through the cracks." Tech Prep aims to serve those middle-achieving students who may attend trade school, community college, or apprenticeship programs, and the intention is for them to learn through hands-on applications. The Center for Occupational Research and Development (CORD) Principles of Technology course, for instance, is an applied physics program taught through labs.

With Tech Prep came numerous changes and additions to the Avery program. The school staff began by creating three strands or pathways to prepare students in engineering, health and human services, or business and marketing. Then they looked at what kind of math and reading background students needed in order to succeed in these three areas, thus increasing standards. Staff made algebra a prerequisite for Principles of Technology, Accounting, and Food Science, the cornerstone courses for the three Tech Prep strands. Students saw that they needed to stay in the academic skills curriculum in order to get into some of the technical courses that interested them most. Avery continued to add more courses that had direct application to careers, eliminating the "path of least resistance." Now the school offers 23 pathways, 18 of which are career-oriented.

What Avery County High School did to improve student performance

- ✓ Eliminated low-level vocational and academic courses
- ✓ Upgraded vocational courses that integrates challenging academic content
- ✓ Encouraged all students to pursue a concentration
- ✓ Developed a teacher-advisor program in which teachers work with the same student for four years
- ✓ Gave tenth-graders a community-college placement test (to assess strengths and plan program for rest of high school)
- ✓ Involved parents in planning children's program of high school study
- ✓ Developed job shadowing for students and teachers
- ✓ Developed internships, apprenticeships, and a senior project
- ✓ Organized an extra-help program
- ✓ Upgraded technology

During the second year of Tech Prep, the school changed to a block schedule and increased the graduation requirements for incoming freshmen. In the fourth year, they began career counseling for all students. In addition, since 1990, Avery staff upgraded the school's technical labs and computer technology. Eventually they replaced the carpentry lab with a state-of-the-art-manufacturing lab. As they eliminated lower level courses, they strategically placed remedial help and counseling services to prevent student failure. A unique diagnostic tool that they use is the community college placement test. Administered to tenth-grade students with low PSAT scores, its results are used to guide planning for the remainder of the student's high school program.

High Schools That Work. After five years of making strides through its Tech Prep reforms, Avery heard about the Southern Regional Education Board's program, High Schools That Work (HSTW). HSTW is a drive to combine challenging academic courses and modern vocational studies to increase student achievement. It was established in 1987 with the belief that middle-level students can master complex academic and technical concepts when schools create an environment that supports their success. Recognizing the strong match between the school's efforts and HSTW, Avery joined HSTW in 1995.

In 1996, Avery became a North Carolina Job Ready site and began job-shadowing projects for teachers and students, with internship and apprenticeship placements for students. That same year, staff from High Schools That Work made a site visit and suggested a few additional improvements, which Avery implemented in 1997. They started an after-school learning lab and overhauled the student guidance system in response to feedback from student surveys. In 1998, when they administered the HSTW assessment, their scores jumped to the highest of all the Pacesetter Schools within HSTW. This achievement is especially significant because Avery tested their Tech Prep students—the middle population—not simply those bound for college.

Leadership and support. Steve Sneed and Will Burgin (principal and vocational director) had the vision, and

it was "the teachers," Sneed says, "who drove the changes." Grice agrees, "one of the main reasons it worked here is the faculty. Teachers were willing to make it work and were given the opportunity to experiment." "They would point us to what we needed to do for the next year, to reach the next level," adds Sneed.

Outside of the school building, Avery leaders have full support from the Board of Education and the district superintendent. School staff gets professional development and technical assistance through Tech Prep and High Schools That Work, and has a relationship with the National School to Work Program that began when the school became a North Carolina Job Ready site. As Avery's achievement became known, the school staff was asked to lend their expertise and experience to the development of the state's new curriculum. In addition, Mayland Community College worked with the state department of education and board to develop an agreement that would allow students to earn college credit for work completed in high school. As a result students have become more engaged. Sneed notes, "we also have support from our students, because they like what they're getting." North Carolina's accountability movement also provided support for Avery's efforts. In 1998 Avery District implemented a student accountability system, requiring that every student pass the End of Course Tests in order to earn credit. Students must demonstrate grade-level proficiency to be promoted.

Maximizing resources. Avery County High is a small school in a poor county. To support their reforms, the principal and the vocational director pooled their funds, primarily state vocational monies and Tech Prep money, as well as a Federal Perkins grant, small schools grant, and profits from the school's drink machines. "It helped," says Grice, "that the principal and the vocational director had adjoining offices." Sneed agrees: "[w]e were just right there together; we both had the vision."

How They Maintain Their Success

Avery has maintained success despite turnover in the vocational director and principal. During the 1999-2000 school year, the school plans to expand dual enrollment with Mayland, add a health occupations pathway, conduct a self-study, and wire the building for Internet access. This advance planning helps staff maintain progress Additionally, the new state accountability policy provides an incentive. As John Grice points out, "North Carolina just tremendously raised the stakes." Although juniors and seniors score well on the SAT and NAEP, Avery's End of Course scores rank near the state's average, especially for ninth- and tenth-graders, and Avery staff is motivated to raise those scores. The teachers produced a series of diagnostic math tests for their incoming ninth-graders and this year will offer a number of pre-algebra courses to meet those students' needs. Additionally, the school is hiring a part-time coordinator to develop career awareness for middle school students, focusing them early on the pathways the high school offers.

Staff also continues to develop ways to keep new teachers abreast of innovative practices. Tech Prep funds have been used to send teachers to visit industry sites and to receive technical training. One larger hope is that the school may even draw industry to Avery County by

showing how well prepared their graduates are. Demonstrating their clear commitment to continued improvement, John Grice notes that although the school received recognition at a recent HSTW national conference: "We don't think we're there yet. We can still improve our scores."

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Central Park East Secondary School
District 4, The Alternative High School Division
New York City, New York

Demographic Profile

- Grades Served: 7-12
- Enrollment: 460
- Ethnic Makeup: 45% African-American, 45% Latino, 10% Caucasian
- Free or Reduced-price Lunch: over 50%
- Mobility Rate: 5%

The School Community

Central Park East Secondary School (CPESS) sits in the Jackie Robinson Educational Complex on the corner of Madison Avenue and 106th Street in East Harlem. It is described as "stark on the outside, but inside it turns friendly, with colorful student-made ceramic tiles leading people to class. Indeed, the whole school seems a wonderful mosaic of activities and classes and inquiries" (Brown et al, 1997). Located in School District 4, which serves one of New York City's poorest communities, CPESS is the first of several dozen alternative schools nurtured by the special Alternative High School Division of New York's Central Board of Education.

The first Central Park East, an elementary school, opened in 1974. At the time, the district's students had the lowest test scores in the city. Debbie Meier, then a teacher, was invited by the district superintendent to start a small elementary school within one wing of P.S. 171. The school grew and expanded to a total of three separate elementary schools and the secondary school. CPESS was founded in 1984. The alternative high schools of District 4 are schools of choice, designed to draw students from around the city and to try alternative concepts in education. As such, CPESS serves both neighborhood students and those from elsewhere in the city, although it gives preference to families in the local community and students from CPE elementary schools. The CPESS student population is mostly African-American and Latino. The teaching staff is diverse in background, ethnicity and experience. Forty percent are of color. At CPESS, teachers participate in school governance and hiring as well as the art of teaching.

What They've Accomplished

The hard work of CPESS staff has paid off as exemplified by high attendance rates (over 90%), low incidence of violence (combined percent of incidents and suspensions half that of city high schools on average; no suspensions or incidents at middle school level), and high graduation and college matriculation rates. Since 1991, ninety

percent of CPESS graduates have gone to college and stayed there (Meier, 1995). The school consciously builds connections with the families of students. Its small structure facilitates individual attention and allows it to respond to crises in students' lives. CPESS is also a school that students stick to: mobility due to transfer or moving is low, and the drop-out rate is less than one percent.

CPESS student achievement data also documents the school's success. Generally, ninety-five percent of CPESS' eleventh-graders demonstrate competency by passing the required State Regents exams in reading and math. In addition, CPESS has succeeded in implementing its own system of performance assessment as a means of evaluating student progress. They assess mastery of student concepts and skills by having students create exhibitions, or portfolios, which demonstrate deep understanding of content. To earn their diploma, students must present collections of work that demonstrate competence in fourteen specific areas.

How They Did It

Coalition of Essential Schools. CPESS was founded with a comprehensive school reform agenda, based on the success of the Central Park East elementary schools and with the support of Ted Sizer, former dean of the Harvard School of Education and founder of the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES). The Coalition is a national network of schools and centers engaged in restructuring to promote better student learning through a set of Common Principles, which guide their whole-school reform efforts. Debbie Meier and her colleagues worked with the district and began to create a program. By fall 1985, CPESS opened its doors with eighty seventh-graders. Each successive year another grade was added, until the school served all six grades (7-12).

The CPESS founders, experts in early childhood education, built the school on a simple foundation: (1) students need to feel safe, and the school needs to be connected with home to help build trust; (2) the school needs to be small in size and scale; (3) teachers can't be effective coaches if they are also judges; (4) people learn best when their natural curiosity is allowed to flourish; and (5) humans are social, interactive learners. They aimed, fundamentally, to teach students to use their minds well, and prepare them to live productive, socially useful and personally satisfying lives.

To guide the school's academic program, the staff agreed on five "habits of mind": evidence (how do you know what you know?), perspective (stepping into other shoes), connections (how and where does what you're learning fit in?), supposition (could it have been otherwise?), and relevance (who cares?). These five are still at the heart of all the school's work, along with the promotion of sound work habits and care and concern for others. CPESS staff built on the Coalition's recommendation to assess students by portfolios, requiring students to "prepare tangible demonstrations of their knowledge and competence rather than accumulating 'seat-time' (credits) or grades on multiple choice tests" (Meier, 1995). Hence, study at CPESS tends to run deep rather than broad by prioritizing critical skills over wide coverage of topics. A student explains, "[t]he way we learn is totally different. We read a lot of articles and literature, but we don't have to take a load of

textbooks home. This school is more than just studying—it's looking inside yourself" (Brown et al, 1997).

The way teachers do their work is also different. With the belief that "to dramatically improve the education of American kids, teachers must be challenged to invent the schools they would like to teach and learn in" (Meier, 1995), CPESS founders structured the school so that it is governed by teachers. They work in teams, hire their own colleagues, assess each other's performance, and are responsible to confront each other when concerns arise.

The CPESS curriculum affirms the central importance of students learning how to learn, how to reason, and how to investigate complex issues that require collaboration, personal responsibility and a tolerance for uncertainty. At CPESS, all students are educated together. Special Education students receive individual attention in small classes, as well as additional time with a resource teacher. Students further benefit from the time their teachers have each week to meet and talk together about student learning.

There is a common core curriculum for all students in grades 7-10 in math/science and the humanities. The four-year program is divided into Division I and Division II. At the end of Division II (tenth-grade), students enter the Senior Institute. The Senior Institute represents the final years of high school and serves as a transition to adulthood. Each student, together with an advisor, draws up a personal program of study designed to prepare the student for graduation. The primary responsibility of the student in the Senior Institute is to complete fourteen required portfolios, which, together with state-mandated minimum competency tests, and a Senior Project, are the basis for receiving a diploma. The emphasis is on mastery rather than credit hours. The student presents his or her work to the graduation committee, consisting of two teachers, another adult of their choice, and student representatives. The portfolio then becomes part of the student's high school transcript, and CPESS staff members work closely with colleges to use it as part of the personalized college application process the school offers each student.

The portfolio system provides an individualized education and the maintenance of high standards. "I see it carrying the most weight in students' college applications," says CPESS co-director Brigette Belletiere, emphasizing that the experience and training students get through the portfolio process helps them succeed in college and beyond. "We use the state-mandated tests to show that we meet the standards, but I'd say we go above and beyond with the portfolio assessment" (Belletiere, 1999).

Believing that the adult world of work can serve as a rich context for student learning, CPESS founders also instituted a community service requirement and in 1987 added a 100-hour internship requirement to the Senior Institute. One morning a week, students work at jobs, often a service learning project. In a school seminar they reflect on their on-the-job learning experiences, and can choose to present one of their portfolios for graduation.

Maximizing resources. As an alternative public school, CPESS receives funding based on enrollment and controls its own spending, except for the physical plant. In the first year, they were eligible for start-up tax-levy support, and won some private

foundation support for staff development, retreats, consultants, and technology. Reallocation of resources has been crucial to the school's success. With the same budget as a typical city school, CPESS reduced the total number of students assigned to a teacher from 160 to 40. Staff did this by eliminating administration, supervisors, and some specialists: there are no guidance counselors, department heads, or deans. Teachers have core periods and work in teams, so they have fewer students and the students have fewer teachers. They have a daily hour-long advisory period that serves as a tutorial, seminar, or study hall. Each advisor (teacher) is closely connected to a small group of advisees and their parents.

The CPESS schedule is another example of maximizing resources. The schedule is focused: two two-hour core periods plus a one-hour advisory each day. Time for teachers to plan and meet together is also maximized. Rooms are arranged to facilitate classroom visits. Teaching teams work the same schedule, and teachers have a one-hour duty-free lunch each day while students can choose other activities such as sports or computer time. Each week, when students perform community service, teachers have a three-hour block of common planning time. The staff also meets every week for large group decision-making. Finally, every afternoon and on Saturday mornings the school is open for sports, study hall, library access, and tutoring.

Making time for staff to meet is key to professional development. Teachers engage in reflection and problem-solving about student learning. They set individual and school-wide goals in line with the CPESS vision, drawing on each other for leadership and expertise.

The district and other partnerships. CPESS' reform is part of a district-wide effort throughout East Harlem to create a network of small elementary and junior high schools and a city-wide effort to create a network of alternative high schools to provide choice in the public system. CPESS has worked over time to connect with and involve parents, orienting them to the school's philosophy and portfolio evaluation process, as well as listening to their input. Students and families visit the school before they choose to attend.

The school has reached into the community to form several partnerships. Currently, CPESS works closely with East Harlem Tutorial, Mt. Sinai Adolescent Health Center, The Ackerman Institute for Family Therapy, The Family Academy, Boys Harbor, The Museum of the City of New York, and El Museo del Barrio.

For technical assistance CPESS has relied primarily on the research and coaching of the Coalition of Essential Schools. In 1996, they were selected by the Big Picture Company to become part of New Urban High School (NUHS), a network of reform-minded schools that share ideas and methods with each other. Not only has CPESS received assistance, but they also offer it. In 1993, the school spearheaded an effort in NYC to create twelve similar schools by transforming two failing comprehensive high schools in Manhattan and the Bronx into a group of small schools. Thus, many of the ideas on which CPESS was founded have been absorbed into education reform agendas across the country.

Parental support. The relationship between families and the school is mutually beneficial. Parents participate in PTA meetings, conduct annual fundraisers (such as raising money for an after-school library), and serve on committees (such as the Personnel Committee). In addition, parents volunteer in the classroom to read with students and participate in other academic activities. In turn, the school staff stays in close contact with parents through teachers who serve as parent advisers to ensure continuous communication. The school also sponsors informational events such as a program on college financing. Finally, the school staff works with parents to help them understand the academic program and the portfolio process.

How They Maintain Their Success

According to CPESS co-director Brigette Belletiere, four specific practices support the school's success:

- ✓ Articulation and maintenance of a clear vision and mission that staff carries out.
- ✓ Goal-setting in line with the vision.
- ✓ Allocation of instructional resources to keep class size small.
- ✓ Providing time for ongoing, job-embedded professional development.

CPESS maintains its progress and continually improves itself through an internal democratic process. The staff develops curricula and determines how to assess it. Teachers define and defend the criteria for earning a CPESS diploma. They uphold these criteria by sitting on graduation committees and voting on the matriculation of seniors. Staff members are held accountable for maintaining the school standards. Because staff turnover is low, continuity is easy to maintain. Joint decision-making and consistent implementation of the standards are reinforced by the structure of the teacher teams.

Through an external review, CPESS also checks its own progress as a school. The school regularly assembles panels of "experts," including college faculty, high school colleagues, parents, community leaders, discipline experts, and education policy-makers to measure the school's progress in meeting its goals and to give input on its standards for graduation. Three committees advise on school policy: an elected staff board, a parent group, and the student council. An NUHS case study of CPESS posits that "the school's resiliency is largely due to its democratic character. Teachers have a tangible sense of ownership and readily embrace steady change and growth" (NUHS Institute, 1998). David Smith, who has been with CPESS for over ten years, first as a teacher and now as director, adds: "A good school is a hungry school, balancing dissatisfaction with not being there yet, with real assessment of and appreciation for its successes" (NUHS Institute, 1998).

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Hawthorne Elementary School
San Antonio Independent School District
San Antonio, Texas

Demographic Profile

- Grades Served: preK-5
- Enrollment: 487
- Ethnic Makeup: 88% Hispanic, 7% Caucasian, 4% African-American, 1% Asian
- English Language Learners: 25%
- Free or Reduced-price Lunch: 91%
- Mobility Rate: 32%

The School Community

Hawthorne Elementary School is located near the heart of downtown San Antonio and sits in the middle of an urban commercial area. San Antonio Community College lies one mile to the east of the school and Fort Sam Houston–headquarters of the Fourth Army and one of the city's four large military bases–lies one mile to the west. Manufacturing and trucking companies face the school, and students who live within walking distance must take the bus to avoid crossing the major traffic arteries that flank it. With a population over one million and growing, San Antonio is the second largest city in Texas. New economic growth and a continued wave of immigrants from Central and South America have helped make San Antonio one of the fastest growing urban areas in the country. Like many of the 66 elementary schools in the district, the majority of Hawthorne Elementary's roughly five hundred students is Hispanic. Almost all the students come from low-income, disadvantaged families, and one-quarter are English language learners. Hawthorne benefits from a high average daily attendance rate of ninety-six percent, but each year one-third of its students are new to the school due to a high mobility rate.

Hawthorne's initial reform efforts began over a decade ago. After several years of planning and preparation, the school developed, with the assistance of external partners, a comprehensive reform design focused on the Core Knowledge model. The common and sequential curriculum of Core Knowledge provided the school with focus, and created a context for teachers to work together on curriculum and instruction issues. The school's reform efforts have made a significant impact on the school and its students.

When Dr. Linda Hollomon, the current school principal, arrived at the school in the middle of the 1997-98 school year, one of the first things she noticed was that, "the school's faculty had a real sense of ownership and pride in their work and school. They wanted to

make a difference in the lives of their students." This sense is a direct result of the reform program, which capitalizes on shared decision-making and use of student data to guide instruction.

Hawthorne Elementary has an experienced and motivated faculty. Demographically, the school staff is similar to other schools in the district: forty-eight percent of the staff is Caucasian, forty-three percent is Hispanic, and nine percent is African-American. At Hawthorne, staff members have worked together closely to maintain the success of the school's reform.

What They've Accomplished

In the face of relatively high student turnover and the successive changes in principals, Hawthorne has remained focused on its reform goals. Student results from the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), the State's statewide assessment program, show that the school's perseverance has paid off. Between 1994 and 1998 the average pass rate for all students at Hawthorne on the TAAS exams rose from 29.0 to 62.7 percent. A closer examination of the data shows that all of Hawthorne's students, ninety-one percent of whom are economically disadvantaged, experienced gains, particularly African-American students. From 1994 to 1998, comprehensive reform designs were being implemented throughout the district because of its partnership with the New American Schools organization. The average TAAS pass rate rose for the district as a whole over the four years. However, Hawthorne's gains were even greater than the district's average gains in reading, writing, and mathematics.

The rise in Hawthorne's student achievement has been demonstrated on national norm-referenced assessments as well as state-specific assessments. In 1999 a Johns Hopkins study looked at the school's CTBS data from 1995 to 1998 and found that student achievement in reading and math increased dramatically over the three-year period. Reading Comprehension scores rose from the 29th percentile in third grade to the 56th percentile in fifth grade (same group of students tested each time). The same students' math scores rose from the 30th percentile to the 36th percentile over the same period.

In addition Hawthorne's teachers have benefited from school reform. They have learned to analyze student data, make decisions, and adapt the curriculum to best meet students' needs. Teachers report that they are energized for work each day and that sharing decision-making about professional development, curriculum, and scheduling has given them greater sense of purpose in their work.

How They Did It

Hawthorne's success is due to key elements of the school's comprehensive reform design, including a professional development partnership with a local university, the Core Knowledge program, community collaboration, and shared decision-making.

Alliance for Better Schools. Hawthorne's comprehensive reform design grew out of a partnership the school began with Trinity University's Department of Education in 1987. That year, Trinity organized the Alliance for Better Schools to improve its undergraduate program for beginning teachers and to assist a select number

of local schools with school improvement programs. Trinity invited four schools, including Hawthorne, to join the Alliance and become a "professional development school." The principal at the time knew the school was at a crossroads and had an opportunity to change. "The school had low test scores, poor attendance, low morale, and low parent involvement," Dr. Hollomon explains. "It was at a place where they could continue down that road or take a different path to reform the school and make it a vibrant community."

The main goals of the partnership were to provide Hawthorne's teachers and administrators with access to a variety of professional development opportunities and assistance with identifying and implementing school improvement programs. Another goal was to provide Trinity a location where its students could participate in year-long internships in pursuit of a master's degree in teaching. Each year, ten Hawthorne staff members act as mentors to student interns. Being named clinical faculty members gives the mentor teachers new professional responsibilities, as well as additional training and experience. The professional development partnership with Trinity gives teachers at Hawthorne the opportunity to stay in touch with current research, try new ideas and instructional practices, and receive a constant flow of new perspectives from faculty and student interns.

The Core Knowledge Program. Hawthorne's staff began its reform process with research. They collected and analyzed data about student achievement, the school's curriculum, and staff attitudes. The needs assessment revealed that the school's curriculum lacked cohesiveness and consistency both between and within grades. The staff also recognized that their students had very few opportunities to build on what they had learned in class or connect it to out-of-class experiences. Since most students came from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, they did not have access to the same cultural, social, or athletic opportunities as many children their age. After identifying these needs and setting goals, Hawthorne began to look for programs that would address them as part of a comprehensive reform approach.

In 1992, with the help of Trinity faculty, the school learned about the Core Knowledge program. Designed to help all students reach high standards, Core Knowledge provides schools with a detailed and sequential curriculum that spells out what students should know and be able to do in language arts, history, geography, visual arts, music, math, and science in grades K-8. The carefully constructed curriculum continuously builds on the knowledge students acquire and avoids repetition to help establish the strong foundation of knowledge they will need for higher levels of learning. Hawthorne teachers feel this resonates well with their identified need for a more cohesive and meaningful curriculum suitable for all their students.

In the next step of their research, several teachers attended the first Core Knowledge conference in Florida in 1992 with financial assistance provided by Trinity. They returned to present their findings to the rest of the school. Shortly thereafter, with the support of the district, the school decided to implement Core Knowledge. In 1992 Hawthorne became the third school in the nation to offer the program.

One of the factors the school had to consider before selecting Core Knowledge was how well it would serve English language learners, who make up one quarter of the school's population. Hawthorne offers a self-contained bilingual program and has one bilingual classroom at each grade level. Like the rest of the faculty, Hawthorne's bilingual teachers supported the decision to implement Core Knowledge because it provided a detailed and sequential curriculum that prepares students for higher levels of learning. It also offered an opportunity to improve the coordination of curriculum between the bilingual classrooms and the other classrooms in the school. Now, bilingual teachers work with other teachers in daily cross-grade and within-grade planning meetings. Used in every classroom, Core Knowledge provides a focus around which all teachers can talk about instructional issues. One drawback noted by the school's bilingual teachers, though, is that since the materials published by Core Knowledge are only available in English, they had to acquire Spanish translations of the resources themselves.

Core Knowledge's program provides the themes and content for part of a school's curriculum at each grade level. Schools integrate Core Knowledge with school curricula, which allows them to meet district and state standards or other requirements not covered by the program. Hawthorne has thus created a standards-based curriculum that incorporates Core Knowledge and math, reading and science programs, including Every Day Math, Balanced Literacy, and the Urban Science Initiative. One of the challenges, according to Dr. Hollomon, has been to integrate Core Knowledge and other activities in a coherent program, and to do so in a way that continues to foster the creativity of teachers and help them use their own observations about what is working in the classroom.

In the Core Knowledge program, schools also decide how they will teach the curriculum and what changes they need to make to their daily schedule or instructional methods to make it work. Hawthorne teachers reallocated time in their schedule to create a forty-five minute window in the middle of the each day for classroom teachers to plan together.

Community Collaboration for Educational Enrichment (CCEE). One of Hawthorne's reform goals is to increase its connection and responsiveness to parents and the surrounding community. To accomplish this goal, they partnered with the San Antonio and Hill Country YMCA to open an on-campus community center, which offers after-school care and creates opportunities for community members to volunteer time and services to the school. The volunteers work in a number of after-school enrichment programs for students and parents.

Before selecting the CCEE as a program or the YMCA as a partner, Hawthorne once again did its homework. After identifying the students' and parents' need for out-of-class academic enrichment opportunities and extended-day supervision, staff researched programs and models to find a good partner.

Together with Core Knowledge, the CCEE is integrated into the school's overall reform effort. Ac··· ·es in the after-school program are coordinated with classroom activities so what

students learn during one part of the day is supported and complemented by what they do in another context. Because of its community outreach efforts, parent interest and involvement in the school has steadily risen each year. Parents are invited to participate in special events or field trips and a series of "Share the Success" days that keep them informed about events in the classroom. CCEE programs include cultural enrichment opportunities during and after school, one-on-one mentoring, sports and fitness programs, tutoring, and events specifically designed to get families involved in their children's education.

Maximizing resources. Hawthorne draws on a variety of resources to support its comprehensive reform effort, including Federal Title I funding; state, district, and local funds; grants and private funds; and in-kind services from parents and community partners who volunteer time, space, and skills. The school reallocated resources from existing tutoring and extended-day programs in order to establish the CCEE. In addition, the school's primary partners—San Antonio Independent School District, Trinity University, and San Antonio and Hill Country YMCA—have helped the school recruit dozens of additional partners to support the school's reform program with funding and volunteers.

Site-based management. The first step Hawthorne took to increase its internal capacity for change was to move toward greater site-based management and shared decision-making. To facilitate communication, collaboration, and coordination throughout the school around issues of curriculum, instruction and management, the school created a series of cross- and within-grade teams. Every member of Hawthorne's staff— instructional and non-instructional— participates in at least one team. The teams are forums, in which staff members discuss new ideas, share concerns, collaborate, propose new policies, or ask for assistance. All of the teams report to the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), whose members include parents, students, administrators, and teachers. The ILT coordinates the activities of the cross-grade and within-grade teams and makes decisions on matters that affect more than one team, such as modifying the school schedule or implementing a new reading program.

The teams create lines of communication that connect all staff, classrooms and grade levels. This mechanism allows the school to coordinate the planning and implementation of its comprehensive reform design and to receive feedback on its impact and progress. The teams give staff, parents, and students a greater voice in shaping the reforms at the school and more responsibility in helping the school meet its goals than these stakeholders had before. As a result, everyone has a greater sense of ownership in the school's reform efforts, which results in more support for the changes. Hawthorne Elementary's strong parent and staff support has been a key element in its ability to maintain momentum over seven years and three different principals.

Professional development. Before reform, the predominant method of professional development at Hawthorne was listening to a featured speaker at a short, one-day workshop. Topics covered did not always directly relate to what was going on in the classroom or to the needs of the teachers or students. Now, the most frequent form of professional development takes place when teachers collaborate and learn

from each other during team meetings. Teachers exchange feedback on classroom management, curriculum, assessment, and instruction. They learn from each other which teaching strategies work well and which ones have not gone as well as they hoped.

When Hawthorne first joined Core Knowledge, the program provided a week's worth of intensive on-site training to introduce the staff to the program's curriculum sequence. Then over 20 teachers attended the first Core Knowledge conference. The initial training addresses where to obtain classroom resources, how to write instructional units for the program, how to write a school-wide plan to support the program, and how to involve parents in the planning process. Core Knowledge continued to provide follow-up visits during the first three years of implementation to help the school revise their curriculum and implement their school-wide plan. Hawthorne now receives assistance from Core Knowledge in the form of annual nationwide conferences, a web site with lesson plans created by teachers around the country, and a recently established Core Knowledge Center in Texas. The new center, housed at Trinity University, provides training and support to Hawthorne and a network of eighty Core Knowledge schools in Texas. This network is an important source of information about effective teaching strategies, new lesson plans, and general assistance.

Because Hawthorne has built its internal capacity, the staff has the expertise necessary to manage most of its comprehensive reform; however external assistance from Trinity University, for example, has also been fundamental to the school's success. A steady partner for twelve years, the University has provided the support and training necessary for the school to consider and implement its reforms. Through the partnership, Hawthorne has created a community of learners and has accessed the resources needed to foster a culture of continuous inquiry. Trinity has improved its teacher education program and gained access to a school in which it can place student interns and conduct classroom-based research.

The district. San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD) is another important partner in all of Hawthorne's reform efforts. From the beginning, SAISD provided financial support to the school for special projects, encouraged the school to join the Alliance for Better Schools, and helped them identify city, state, and federal grant opportunities that would support the reform programs. "It is a tremendous gift," says Dr. Hollomon, "when a district agrees to give a school permission to undertake a reform effort and then gives it room to pursue it."

How They Maintain Their Success

To determine how well a particular method or strategy is working, teachers rely on data. Through its partnership with Trinity, all of Hawthorne's teachers learn how to analyze and present their students' performance data from the TAAS, the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, and externally developed Core Knowledge tests. In presentations in front of the entire staff, teachers compare their students' performance to other students' performance on a state and national level. They also examine how well their students are meeting state standards–the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills standards–and Core Knowledge's curricular standards.

To gauge progress at key points during the year, Hawthorne students take two or three short math and reading assessments in addition to end-of-year examinations. Teams of teachers carefully examine student results to identify if the school is meeting its goals and which areas need the most improvement. After analyzing the data, they discuss how to improve their own teaching to meet their students' needs and what outside assistance they could use. This continuous process of reflection on student data has kept the reform effort on track. The school has successfully merged the process of continuous improvement into the learning environment.

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King Middle School
Portland School Department
Portland, Maine

Demographic Profile

- Grades Served: 6-8
- Enrollment: 606
- Ethnic Makeup: 74% Caucasian, 12% African-American, 11% Asian-American, 3% Hispanic
- English Language Learners: 22%
- Free or Reduced-price Lunch: 65%

The School Community

King Middle School welcomes students from diverse neighborhoods in the city of Portland, Maine. Students come from elementary schools in the surrounding inner city, as well as the islands in Casco Bay. The population of English language learners at King has increased dramatically since the early 1990s, from six percent in 1992, to twenty-two percent in 1997. Students at King speak twenty-eight different languages.

In 1992, King became a middle school and implemented a Title I schoolwide program. In 1993-94, it adopted the Expeditionary Learning/Outward Bound (ELOB) school improvement model, a New American Schools (NAS) design. Through authentic projects, fieldwork, and service, ELOB focuses teaching and learning toward enabling all students to meet rigorous academic standards and character goals.

ELOB was chosen because staff believed it would help all students. ELOB's experiential learning approach is proving successful, particularly for the school's growing population of English language learners.

What They've Accomplished

Through ELOB, King Middle School has made impressive strides in its schoolwide reform. Scores on the Maine Educational Assessment (MEA) have climbed steadily since 1994. Between the fall of 1994 and fall 1996, eighth-grade scores on the MEA increased in all seven subjects, surpassing the state averages in all but one content area. The MEA is an open-ended test in seven disciplines that reports scores on a scale of 100 to 400 points. Scores in reading increased from 255 to 305; in writing from 185 to 245; and in mathematics from 290 to 360. There were similar gains in science, social studies, and the arts and humanities.

How They Did It

"All kids can learn and show it" is the mission of King Middle School. The instructional program revolves around hands-on, active learning experiences that prepare students for real-life challenges. In 1992, the same year that King became a middle school, it began its transition to becoming a schoolwide program under Title I. The school improvement team conducted a needs assessment and analysis showing that academic success and socioeconomic status were correlated. As King Middle School principal Michael McCarthy put it, "[w]e found that we were running two schools—one for the haves and one for the have-nots. We needed a dramatic experience to get King out of a rut and promote trust among members of the school community." The King team decided to unify its staff, materials, and funding—including ESEA Title I, Eisenhower Professional Development, and Migrant Programs to fully support their improvement efforts.

Expeditionary Learning/Outward Bound. ELOB extends the experience of Outward Bound, an adventure and service-based education program, into public schools. Teachers, students, and leadership teams in these schools build a culture of respect and high expectations for all. Following this model, the use of space and scheduling and the allocation of financial and human resources are examined. Flexible grouping replaces tracking, and students stay with a teacher or a team of teachers for at least two years.

Expeditionary Learning/Outward Bound: Ten Design Principles and Core Practices

- ✓ *The Primacy of Self-Discovery:* students discover their abilities, values, passions, and responsibilities by learning in situations that offer adventure and the unexpected.
- ✓ *The Having of Wonderful Ideas:* the school respects ideas and teaches so as to build on children's curiosity about the world.
- ✓ *The Responsibility for Learning:* learning is both a personal process of discovery and a social activity.
- ✓ *Intimacy and Caring:* learning is fostered in small groups where there is trust, sustained caring and mutual respect.
- ✓ *Success and Failure:* all students must be assured a fair measure of success, but also experience failures in order to overcome negative inclinations and prevail against adversity.
- ✓ *Collaboration and Competition:* the value of friendship, trust, and group endeavor is made manifest so that students compete against their own personal best, not each other.
- ✓ *Diversity and Inclusivity:* students are encouraged to investigate, value, and draw upon their own different histories, talents, and resources together with those of other communities and cultures.
- ✓ *The Natural World:* students learn to be respectful of the natural world and relationships within it.
- ✓ *Solitude and Reflection:* students have time alone to explore their own thoughts, make connections and create their own ideas, and then reflect on them with others.
- ✓ *Service and Compassion:* prepare students to learn from and be of service to others.

(ELOB: A Design for Comprehensive School Reform)

These teams of teachers plan expeditions, critique plans, and discuss their students' work. Community members and parents are invited into the school as visiting experts and as an audience for student presentations. Benchmarks for improvement goals are reviewed annually and drive each school's overall improvement plan.

During the 1993-1994 school year, after careful consideration and analysis, King adopted the Expeditionary Learning/Outward Bound model, a New American Schools (NAS) design. "The marriage of the Outward Bound and schoolwide philosophies," McCarthy explains, "enables us to ensure that every child has a shot at success." Student learning occurs in ELOB through purposeful, rigorous, and interdisciplinary learning experiences that involve intellectual, community service, and physical activities. ELOB projects span the curriculum, from language arts and math, to history, science, computer technology, and beyond. For example, a year-long sixth-grade project (described below) integrated difficult academic material with a meaningful service project in the local community.

Service project: An example. King teachers capitalized on city planning for a new aquarium in Portland, Maine to involve their students in an interdisciplinary math and architecture project. Working with the president of the Gulf of Maine Aquarium Committee, teachers decided sixth-grade students would create three final products: a floor plan of their vision for the Gulf of Maine Aquarium, a written proposal to describe details of the floor plan, and an oral presentation of their work. Students visited the New England Aquarium in Boston, learned about the proposed aquarium sites in Portland, learned about marine life, and wrote business letters to aquariums around the world asking for pictures, features, and blueprints. As their ideas took shape, students felt pride and ownership in their work. Attendance was at an all-time high, while discipline problems dropped to an all-time low. The students wanted to be at school and wanted to hear more of what the teachers had to say because they saw the immediate usefulness of the lessons.

At times, King sixth-graders were also frustrated. Their task required creativity coupled with precise mathematical calculations. But the teachers anticipated bumps along the way and helped students see the value of perseverance and learning new skills. In addition to creating the design, students had to write a proposal; thus their writing skills were crucial. The connection with the community kept these students focused and pushed them to do their best work. Teachers helped them hone their oral skills as student groups practiced their presentations.

At the culmination, sixteen students made highly successful presentations to the Aquarium Committee president and several King teachers. The president invited the students to meet with representatives from the Gulf of Maine Aquarium Committee to present again. These sixteen students became a focus group for the Aquarium Committee; thus the committee gained a group of knowledgeable, excited twelve-year-olds—the target audience for the aquarium. Lastly, the Committee president invited two King students to be on the Aquarium committee, contributing to the decision-making process and sharing ideas between the committee and the one hundred sixth-grade students

involved in the King project. Through youth service, these students felt the power that comes from being a participating member of the community at large.

This model, coupled with several other elements, contributes to King's success. These other elements include

- a clearly defined mission,
- effective leadership,
- student-centered teaching, and
- opportunities for all students to explore their personal interests and become reflective learners.

Other changes. The staff decided that teachers would remain with the same group of students for two consecutive years to foster a climate of trust and increase ties among students within classes and between students and their teachers. This grouping encourages teachers to be accountable for student progress and strengthens parent and teacher communication.

At the same time, King adopted an inclusive approach, eliminating pull-out assistance to migrant English language learners, and others who require additional academic assistance. Instead, these students receive extra services in regular classrooms. Additional specialized assistance is available in small study groups, an after school program, and a student learning center staffed with diagnostic teaching specialists and counselors.

There are no set class periods or bells at King. Teachers have the flexibility to schedule the school day according to the tasks on which the student groups are working. Students are grouped heterogeneously into in-depth, interdisciplinary learning expeditions that accommodate their interests and learning styles. Flexible scheduling allows students to delve deeply into the curriculum and explore questions that relate to their lives. A variety of assessment tools are used across classrooms to evaluate students' learning: portfolios, critique sessions, self-evaluation, performance tasks, benchmark assessments, and evaluation conferences when each student's achievement is discussed.

Teachers at King Middle School use a number of other assessment methods to evaluate students' work. Because the Expeditionary Learning/Outward Bound model engages students in long-term rigorous projects, teachers place great emphasis on evaluating students' culminating projects. They measure student performance through observations, in-class assessments, public performances and presentations, portfolios, student self-evaluations, and pre-and post-reading and writing scores. The teachers design rubrics and product descriptors that set standards and guide students' work as well as serve as points for evaluating that work.

The professional learning community. The professional learning community at King includes fifty-five teachers, eleven educational technology specialists, four guidance counselors, and two administrators. Professional development revolves around the middle school philosophy, the ELOB model, and principles that promote ongoing reflection and revision. According to McCarthy, ELOB has inspired teachers to view professional development as an integrated philosophy rather than as a series of fragmented workshops. In 1993, when King became an Expeditionary Learning Center, a NAS designer worked with staff to integrate the ELOB

model with other features of the middle school program. Now, a faculty member serves as a teaching strategist and offers on-site training. The teaching strategist provides on-the-job mentoring, seeks out professional development opportunities, and obtains instructional materials for teachers. The model fosters collaboration among teachers, who use three common planning periods per week to plan expeditions and regular classroom instruction.

Staff development opportunities throughout the year model ELOB principles, inviting educators to become learners by immersing them in "summits" that focus on academic content pertaining the middle school curriculum and assessment. In one-day community explorations teachers work with colleagues in small groups to identify, review, and compile potential field sites and resources for future learning expeditions. They have the option to attend five-day institutes on curriculum writing or on organizing and sequencing learning expeditions to make their practices consistent with state and local standards. During the school year, the faculty participates in topic-focused staff meetings and mid-week workshops emphasizing best practices for young adolescents. The school's teachers also mentor pre-service teachers from the University of Southern Maine's new internship program, introducing these future teachers to the ELOB model.

Parent and community partnerships. ELOB calls for a great deal of hands-on community based learning. McCarthy points out, "[w]hen you do this type of work you need parents to accomplish it. You are not looking to 'get' parents involved; you need them to get the job done." ELOB learning expeditions rely on expertise and support of both parents and community volunteers. King recruits volunteers to supervise students and assist with the logistics involved in implementing off-campus expeditions. A Portland law firm has been a particularly supportive partner to King, contributing to the off-site learning expeditions by mentoring students and promoting the school's arts program. The firm showcases students' artwork in its lobby and has donated lights so student work can be prominently displayed in the school hallways. King keeps parents and community members informed of learning activities and student performances through newsletters and has produced two videos highlighting students' projects.

Parent, community, and teacher volunteers supervise After School at King, a program for students who request additional academic assistance or who have questions about their homework. In addition, King provides four rooms that are open for students, parents, and community members to collaborate on projects before, during, or after school. According to McCarthy, the idea for the project rooms originated with the students themselves. "The rooms are a way to level the playing field for many of our students who live in small quarters and do not have access to materials such as poster board and art supplies," he said.

King makes a special effort to reach migrant parents through home visits in the fall and an annual multicultural/migrant party in May, which attracts 75 to 80 percent of migrant families. The staff conducts regular conferences with parents to keep them informed about expectations and their students' progress. The Parent Teacher Organization has also become increasingly popular since King became an Expeditionary Learning

Center, and its members endowed a significant amount of money toward technology and the school's drama program to increase experiential learning opportunities.

How They Maintain Their Success

To maintain the school's reform effort, King uses a continuous improvement model. During a summer institute each year school staff looks at quality expeditions and critiques each other's work. King teachers have presented their work to schools and at conferences in Maine and other states. They have found that this pushes them to improve the quality of their work.

King significantly changed its orientation and philosophy when it became an Expeditionary Learning Center. To maintain effectiveness, the ELOB model requires a considerable commitment of time and energy from the King staff. The model continues to infuse the latest research-based instructional strategies into the academic program. A positive aspect of the change involves the public display of student work at King's annual Demonstration Day, a school-wide event that celebrates student learning and success and enjoys community-wide participation. These demonstrations, coupled with the bonds forged between teachers and students as they prepare for the day's events, have changed the school's culture and motivated both staff and students. "Success breeds success," McCarthy observed, "when teachers and the outside community see that our students can produce high-quality work, they want to stay committed."

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Longfellow Elementary School
San Francisco Unified School District
San Francisco, California

Demographic Profile

- Grades Served: K-5
- Enrollment: 537
- Ethnic Makeup: 40% Filipino, 28% Latino, 18% Chinese, 6% Other Non-Caucasian, 4% Caucasian, 4% African-American
- English Language Learners: 41%
- Free or Reduced-price Lunch: 63%

The School Community

Longfellow Elementary, one of San Francisco's oldest schools, is located in the Outer Mission District, near the border between San Francisco and Daly City. It was founded in 1867 as West End Primary School, a two-room schoolhouse on Mission Street, and has since seen two new buildings, an addition, and a name change. The contemporary Longfellow School is a two-story orange-colored building surrounded by blacktop playgrounds with a sprinkling of play equipment and a cyclone fence. In contrast to the drab concrete exterior, the hallways of the school smile with pictures of children from many different backgrounds and large posters of brightly painted watercolors.

Originally an Italian neighborhood, the Outer Mission has a high population of Latino, Filipino, and Chinese immigrant families. Restaurants in the area fill the air with the tantalizing aromas of Mexican and Chinese food eateries. Along with the mouthwatering smells are signs of a neighborhood in flux. Many of the businesses have graffiti painted on their exterior walls and iron bars protecting their windows. Most of Longfellow's students live in the surrounding community. Sixty-three percent of Longfellow's students receive a free or reduced-price lunch. Over forty percent of them speak English as a second language. Longfellow is a Title I school.

When Dr. Mary Marin became the principal of Longfellow ten years ago, she saw it as a good educational environment but not a top school. "If you had seventy-seven schools, we would have been number twenty or twenty-five on that list," she explains. "It was a nice community school with a good parent group, but we were not cutting edge. What's new here is the challenging and fun environment for students."

What They've Accomplished

Over the last six years, the Longfellow community has produced a school environment bursting with creativity and has dramatically improved student academic achievement. For example, in 1993, Longfellow first-graders scored at

the 27th percentile in reading and the 36th percentile in math. Five years later, their scores jumped to the 77th and 82nd percentiles, respectively. Similarly, fifth-grade reading and math scores increased from the 43rd and 50th percentiles, to the 79th and 84th percentiles in the same five-year period. Other indicators of progress include an average daily attendance of 99.8% (one of the highest in the district) and increases in the number of parents attending parent meetings.

Longfellow has also accomplished changes in instructional practices to improve student learning. These changes include the following:

- integration of reading, writing, speaking, and the arts,
- creation of a community of learners,
- increased cooperative and collaborative activities,
- use of multiple types of student evaluation,
- development of higher order thinking in English, Spanish and Filipino languages, and
- implementation of project-based learning.

How They Did It

School-wide planning. Longfellow school has undergone a number of reforms that began with school-wide planning. First, in order to create a common vision, Principal Marin sat down with the entire staff and many stakeholders (parents, school site committees, and other community members) to ask, "What do you want for the school and its students five and ten years from today?" They started to brainstorm, framing their discussions around improving student academic achievement. Next, they created a five-year plan, by which they made changes to professional development, parent and community involvement, the school program, and their use of resources, all in the interest of boosting student achievement.

Complementing these activities, the school underwent an additional school-wide self-study, called Program Quality Review (PQR)–a state mandated review process conducted every three years. Review team members administered teacher, student, parent and other surveys, analyzed test scores and other student assessments, and reflected on case studies to guide their reform process. The data were used to guide planning to improve the educational environment of the school, and the results were incorporated into the school site plan, which is regularly updated.

From this data analysis the staff recognized the need to focus on improving math achievement and literacy, particularly for students who score in the bottom quartile or are African-American, Latino, or limited English-proficient. Staff also committed to coordinate their program through a "communities within communities" approach that involves and keeps everyone informed. They decided to make time for teamwork and to use teacher leadership to guide reform. Dr. Marin explains, "[t]he faculty began to deal with real issues, always focused on improving academic achievement."

Using recommendations from the Program Quality Review results, as well as state and district curriculum standards, the leadership, curriculum, and grade level teams began to design a reform process and new program to meet the needs of these students. For example, they decided to integrate arts into the curriculum, hoping to increase the self-esteem of many of the racially

What It Takes

According to Dr. Marin, the principal at Longfellow, comprehensive reform must include the following elements:

- Getting all stakeholders (parents, staff, and community) involved
- Basing reform efforts on reliable research and effective practices
- Defining, clarifying, communicating, and constantly revisiting a shared vision
- Finding and keeping the best teachers, who have a love for education
- Providing ongoing professional development
- Reallocating time and resources to support reform
- Improving curriculum and instruction
- Regularly assessing students' academic progress
- Holding high expectations for all students and staff
- Maintaining the focus and momentum throughout the school year

and ethnically diverse students who were quiet and shy. Thus, K-2 students took ballet, and third- and fourth-graders learned jazz. Since then, they have performed at parades and carnivals, and even for San Francisco's mayor.

Professional development. Professional development at Longfellow is teacher-driven, provided on site, and, according to the principal, "paramount to the reform process." Before the start of reform, staff development was a "one shot deal," occurring through a few district staff development days. Now, the principal has teachers develop their own staff development plans, which are explicitly tied to student achievement. Examples of professional development activities include reading and discussing professional literature and receiving training in conflict management and peer mediation. In addition, teachers learn from each other in grade-level and team meetings. Longfellow recently added eight new teachers (because of a large increase in student population and the California's class size reduction initiative), who are supported through the district, bilingual department, and school site mentoring programs.

Parent and community involvement. Longfellow staff has fostered community involvement through several channels. Staff has reached out to honor and include grandparents, as well as parents. They met with community-based organizations to identify ways to enlist community and parental support, discussing community service projects and recruitment of volunteers. They also set up a Career Day with community members to increase student career awareness.

Several partnerships with community institutions also fuel Longfellow's reform process. The school offers placements for San Francisco State University teacher interns, who not only learn from Longfellow teachers, but also generate extra energy and creativity for the school. Longfellow teachers work closely with the Parkside District office of San Francisco Unified to discuss curriculum implementation techniques. They have participated in staff development training with the Bay Area Writing Project and developed an

Adopt-A-School partnership with Wells Fargo Bank, which provides funds, field trips, and tutor volunteers to enrich the school program. Through a recently awarded Healthy Start Planning Grant, Longfellow secured counseling services for its students from the University of San Francisco Center for Child and Family Development and offered parenting classes through the Mental Health Department. The San Francisco Public Library provides student library cards and summer reading programs.

Improving math achievement and literacy. Longfellow staff made improving student achievement in math and literacy a priority in their five-year plan. They began by working with lead teachers to improve math instruction. In year one (1994-95), all staff met monthly to learn about constructivist teaching methods. They drew from the Used Number Series, Math Leadership, Family Math, and other materials to focus on grade-level lessons, assessment, and problem-solving strategies. In year two (1995-96), the associate superintendent provided the school funding for a math mentor from San Francisco State University to assist this process while grade-level teams developed goals and objectives for their math curriculum. During the third year, three teachers traveled to Boston with the Mathematics Initiative Program to learn more about other effective strategies. Two other teachers became leaders in the district's Mathematics Leadership Program. The grade-level focus was on assessment and alignment of site goals with district standards. For the past two years, the school has focused on developmentally appropriate teaching methods, higher expectations, and interdisciplinary, inquiry-based problem solving.

During this period of reform, Longfellow staff collaborated to increase student reading scores as well. They chose Reading Recovery, an intervention program developed by New Zealand educator and psychologist Marie M. Clay to provide intensive assistance to first-graders having difficulties learning to read. A reading specialist provides individualized instruction to help low-performing first-grade students reach and exceed grade-level performance in reading.

Longfellow implemented the program through a lead teacher who worked with teachers and students in small groups, and an outside expert who conducted staff workshops. As the staff learned more about the theory, they focused increasingly on assessment and early intervention in the language arts program, along with their existing effort to integrate the visual and performing arts into the curriculum. For instance, ballet students not only learned how to perform but also wrote about the experience.

Longfellow staff also identified writing as an important area for improvement, even though 85 percent of their fourth-graders passed the written minimum standard test in 1997. That same year, the school began participating in staff development with the Bay Area Writing Project (BAWP). BAWP is a collaborative program of the University of California at Berkeley and Bay Area schools, working together to improve writing and the teaching of writing at all grade levels and in all disciplines. Currently, teachers are writing grade-level goals and objectives for language arts that are aligned with district performance standards.

Different Ways of Knowing. In 1996 the Longfellow community brought in

Different Ways of Knowing (DWoK), the Galef Institute's collaborative approach to systemic school reform. It aims to help teachers, administrators, students, and the rest of the education community create a new school culture by combining professional development, educational philosophy, and research-based, constructivist curriculum materials. The program is helping Longfellow to integrate language, visual, and performing arts, along with the Spanish and Filipino bilingual programs. It helps teachers create learning experiences that refine and extend literacy skills and problem solving. English-language learners are encouraged to use their primary language as well as English, and to use context clues to further their understanding. Through DWoK's professional development arm, all Longfellow teachers receive training on teaching that integrates the arts, multiple intelligences and literary skills; on connecting curriculum, instruction, assessment and reporting; and on creating an authentic learning community.

Maximizing resources. The Longfellow community (the Leadership Team, School Site Council, and the PTA) reallocated resources to align with their reform goals. For example, since professional development became a number one priority in their process of reform, they committed $5000 per year to the Galef Institute for professional development and got $25,000 from the district to support the first year of implementing DWoK. Since math achievement was also a central concern, the Leadership team and principal solicited district funds for a teacher math tutor. School staff also wrote and received a Healthy Start planning grant, Service Learning grant, and Arts Educator Founders collaborative grant.

The leadership team reallocated funds to give teachers extra release time to work in grade-level teams or committees, coach one another, visit classrooms, and provide parent workshops. The team also rescheduled the school day to allow time for teachers to collaborate. Finally, the team acknowledges and rewards teachers for the extra effort they give, through teacher appreciation luncheons and PTA-raised stipends for classroom supplies.

How They Maintain Their Success

Longfellow's principal believes it is essential to revisit the shared vision of the school constantly in order to maintain momentum. Thus, staff begins each year by going over the history of the school, discussing its standards, and setting goals together. The process orients new teachers to Longfellow's tradition: activities like the school carnival and Grandparents' Day; high expectations for all staff and students; and a school culture that welcomes parent participation.

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Harriet Tubman Learning Center (formerly P.S. 154)
Chancellor's District
New York City, New York

Demographic Profile

- Grades Served: Pre-K-5
- Enrollment: 650
- Ethnic Makeup: 81% African American, 17% Hispanic, 1.5% Caucasian, 1.5% Other Non-Caucasian
- English Language Learners: 10%
- Free or Reduced-price Lunch: 99.5%

The School Community

Harriet Tubman Learning Center was born in 1996, a "new school" reconstituted from P.S. 154 in Harlem's District 5. It is an urban, inner-city school in a high-poverty community. Nearly all of its students are eligible for Title I funds and free lunch, and most live in a low-income housing complex located across the street from the school.

At the Harriet Tubman Learning Center, the school improvement process has been guided and supported by the Chancellor's District, a special district created to serve and support the city's lowest-performing schools. In 1989 New York State began a system to monitor troubled schools, called Schools Under Registration Review (SURR). Because third-grade reading scores had declined for three years in a row at P.S. 154, it was cited as low-performing, placed in State Registration Review, and given three years to improve or face closure. By 1996, the state was about to take over the school when the New York City Schools Chancellor requested one more opportunity to try and improve the city's low-performing schools, not just with a new plan, but with a redesign of the entire school, including major changes in staffing and in curriculum and instruction. The Chancellor took over P.S. 154 and eight other schools, creating a new district to oversee their improvement. The teachers' union facilitated staff changes, helping teachers who wanted to leave find other positions. Each school was assigned a liaison in the district and conducted a structured review, examining its curriculum and instruction, school climate, professional development, parent involvement, and more.

At P.S. 154, Elizabeth Jarrett, former assistant principal, was hired as the principal, and the district provided technical assistance to her team of teachers, administrators, parents, and students to plan for the school's redesign. Since 1996, Harriet Tubman Learning Center has become a bright, clean facility with a strong sense of

collegiality, collaboration, and shared mission.

What They've Accomplished

In the last five years, Harriet Tubman has boosted student success on all fronts. From 1995 to 1998, third-graders reading at or above the state minimum level increased from 35 to 71 percent. In the same period of time, third- through fifth-grade students performing at or above grade level on the citywide test increased from 23 to 45 percent in reading and from 36 to 66 percent in math. By 1997, the school's math and writing achievement was on par with the average scores for New York City. City performance-based assessments in language arts and math show similar positive trends in student achievement.

In addition to demonstrating achievement gains, Tubman has achieved a decrease in disciplinary incidents and suspensions, an increase in parent participation, and heightened staff morale. The school has received notice by the American Federation of Teachers, Time magazine, and leaders in government.

How They Did It

When asked how they did it, Principal Elizabeth Jarrett immediately replies, "By putting in a lot of crazy hours." The principal spends much of her time focused on helping teachers strengthen classroom instruction. As a result, Jarrett explains: "If you're in classrooms all day, you have to do the paperwork sometime, and you end up doing it after hours."

The strongest impetus for school change, she says, was the negative press P.S. 154 received for its poor performance. That spurred the staff to work to turn around the school and take full advantage of the concentration of resources made available through the Chancellor's Office. Those resources included a strong commitment from the staff in the Chancellor's Office. As Tubman's liaison there, Senior Assistant Marjorie Elliot observes, "You could find a million reasons for it not to work, but we were going to do it. We focused our energy on instruction, we reestablished priorities, and we worked smarter... but it requires absolute, consistent, undying support."

Key components of Tubman's success are:

- Strong site leadership;
- Shared vision and a climate of collegiality;
- Strong and consistently implemented curriculum with commensurate professional development; and
- Community involvement.

In addition, the district focus on providing sustained support to turn around low-performing schools has been a major force for school improvement at Tubman.

Shared vision and planning. At the beginning of the redesign process, Principal Jarrett asked constituents to imagine their ideal school. She established a common mission among all the stakeholders to focus on student success. The mission focuses on creating a professional and collaborative environment that supports teaching and learning and that addresses individual student needs. The team changed the school schedule to give teachers time each week to plan together. The school day

was extended to provide care and enrichment for students. The school team instituted a personnel committee–made up of teachers and parents–to interview prospective teachers and make selections in alignment with the school's mission. The principal notes that creating a productive learning environment requires the involvement not only of teachers but also parents and community members: "To the parents we emphasize that the school is a professional setting, and they need to make an appointment to see a teacher... Because we value them, we want to take the time to hear what they say."

The leadership of the principal is vital to the reform effort. The principal helps maintain staff commitment to reform by nurturing the vision and keeping the school on course. Principal Jarrett describes her approach, saying, "Our goal is to educate each child, to provide skills and instill a love of learning. We put aside our differences to do what's right for children. We operated in that mode together to interrupt the cycle of failure." Elliott, the District liaison to the school, believes that Jarrett's leadership has been effective because "She supports and encourages her staff to be the best they can be, and her expectations are consistent."

Partnerships. Both the district and the school chose to place Success for All (SFA) at the core of their instructional program. SFA has several different components: 90-minute block of reading instruction each morning, a family support team, and one-on-one tutoring. Students are taught in small reading groups according to their reading level and assessed every eight weeks. To implement the program, the principal and SFA facilitator attended a weeklong training, teachers received a one-day overview, and then the teachers received extensive on-site professional development in using the research-based teaching strategies. According to district staff, SFA brings together effective practices for fostering literacy and its highly structured method gives new teachers a strong, common foundation for classroom instruction. Additionally, SFA utilizes instructional strategies, such as cooperative learning, that teachers can use to develop their students' skills in other academic areas beyond reading.

With Success for All as the backbone of the school's instructional program, school and district staffs have integrated several extended-day programs to assist children with diverse learning needs. For instance, *Voyager Expanded Learning* provides a hands-on literacy-based study of themes in an after school enrichment program. The unit, *Success City*, invites students to use math, reading, and writing skills to invent a product, patent it, and bring it to market. The third grade is using Lightspan, a technology-based extended learning program that allows students to practice reading and math skills at home through video equipment/video games. Tubman offers a YMCA after-school program, *Virtual Y*, for students in grades 2-4. The curriculum is designed to build strong values, promote healthy lifestyles, and improve academic performance, with a special emphasis placed on developing literacy. Tubman even offers Saturday classes to provide students with an opportunity to improve their test-taking skills.

Community partnerships are helping Tubman Elementary meet student needs and provide enriched opportunities in the arts. Interns from New York University build capacity for Tubman to serve special education

students by providing counseling services and parent education. A grant program through VH1, *Save the Music*, provides instrumental music opportunities to Tubman students. In addition, the principal solicited a supplemental grant to partner with Turtle Bay Music School to provide music education in the early grades and formed a private partnership to offer music education to kindergartners after school.

Professional development. To make programs and partnerships work for students, teachers are engaged in ongoing professional development. The principal articulates, "If you are going to move the educational agenda, you have to keep the people on the front lines informed of key practices." The United Federation of Teachers, the New York City teachers' union, helped Tubman set up and staff a teachers' center. The district has committed three additional full-time positions to provide teacher support in literacy, math, and technology, in addition to a full-time, on-site SFA facilitator. This professional development team gives workshops, mentors teachers, and works with staff in a non-threatening way. The team has helped to build collegiality among the staff. Off-site, the Chancellor's District offers literacy training for teachers in the summer and provided a data analysis consultant to assist site teams in using their test data to improve instruction.

Parent and community involvement. Community involvement is another important aspect of Harriet Tubman's reform program. Prior to its reform efforts, the school received much more criticism from parents and the community than support and involvement. As the school began making improvements, school staff reached out to parents through workshops. For instance, school staff now holds orientation sessions for families of kindergartners to acquaint them with the school, the curriculum, and the students' day. Teachers and school staff continue this outreach with monthly workshops to familiarize parents with school programs like SFA, or with a theme students are studying. Parents are invited on class field trips and kept informed about the expectations of the state testing program. Each morning, parents are also encouraged to come inside with their students and visit before the school day begins. Parents know they are welcome at the school. All of these efforts have led to an increase in parent involvement.

In addition to parents, the surrounding community has shown its support to the school through special projects. Community members volunteered their weekend time to build a new playground through a partnership with Harlem Hospital. The City Parks Foundation worked with the Board of Education to create a garden in another part of the playground. One of Tubman's custodians helped build boxes for the garden beds, and teachers now integrate student garden projects into the curriculum.

Maximizing resources. From District liaison Marjorie Elliott's perspective, "It made a difference that the system at large made a commitment to think out of the box." The Supervising Superintendent of the Chancellor's District decided to keep the district office small, committing the bulk of the District's resources to the schools. Elliott notes, and Principal Jarrett agrees, that there was "an attitude that if we need to do it, we can find the money." The key expectation is that

the principal can show how funds are being used directly to improve teaching and learning at the school. Principal Jarrett concurs that flexibility about funding has been crucial. For example, being a Title I schoolwide program allows her school to combine its resources to serve the needs of all students.

How They Maintain Their Success

Harriet Tubman Learning Center has shown marked improvement. As school performance has improved, district and state intervention has lessened, yet the support for reform at all levels continues. The school is no longer under State Registration Review, though it remains part of the Chancellor's District.

Tubman Elementary is working to sustain its existing reforms and continue to make improvements. Tubman's strategies for sustaining reform include staying focused on instruction and paying close attention to student achievement. A strong core curriculum, with Success for All as the foundation in reading, helps keep instruction consistent even as teacher turnover remains a challenge, given area competition for teachers and overall teacher shortages. Maintaining resources is another challenge that the school continues to tackle by seeking new opportunities for partnering, positive media attention, and fundraising to support school improvement efforts. Finally, stable leadership and a shared mission to continually focus on student success helps the school to stay on its path. Tubman's principal reflects, "We are making progress, and we have to continue to compete against ourselves. We've gotten accolades, visits [from important people]. I don't think we are ready to exhale yet. We keep on raising the bar; we keep on changing."

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Sources

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Resources

Side-by-Side Comparison: Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program and Title I Schoolwide Program

Determining Effectiveness—Three Examples

Checklist for Improvement

Contact Information for School Reform Models

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Side-by-Side Comparison: Comprehensive School Reform Program and Title I Schoolwide Program

The chart below shows how the features of the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program and the ESEA Title I Schoolwide program complement one another. It also highlights some of the special areas of focus within each program, including features in the CSRD program that build on and further strengthen the approach of a Title I schoolwide program. It is important to note that while each program may have certain special emphases, these programs share the same spirit and aim – to encourage and support schoolwide reform that helps all children meet challenging state and local standards. A successful school should take all of the factors below into careful account in designing and implementing a quality school improvement plan.

Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program (CSRD)	**Title I Schoolwide Program (SWP)**	**Special Emphases**
Comprehensive Design with Aligned Components: Comprehensive design for effective school functioning, including instruction, assessment, classroom management, professional development, parental involvement and school management, that aligns the schools' curriculum, technology, professional development into a schoolwide reform effort designed to enable all students to meet challenging state content and performance standards and addresses results of needs assessment	Development of a comprehensive plan to improve the instructional program Comprehensive needs assessment of the entire school based on student performance on state standards Schoolwide reform strategies that address the needs of all children in the school	**CSRD** – Strong focus on addressing the core academic program for the entire school **SWP** – Plans for assisting children in transition from pre-school to elementary school
Effective, Research-based Methods and Strategies: Innovative strategies and proven methods for student learning, teaching, and school management that are based on reliable research and effective practices, and have been replicated successfully in schools with diverse characteristics	Schoolwide reform strategies that are based on effective means for improving children's achievement Effective instructional strategies that increase the amount and quality of learning time and provide an enriched and accelerated curriculum, especially to students in target populations	**CSRD –** Research-based strategies for which there is solid evidence of effectiveness **SWP –** Use of extended learning time, such as extended school year, before- and after-school programs, and summer school

Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program (CSRD)	Title I Schoolwide Program (SWP)	Special Emphases
Professional development: High quality and continuous teacher and staff professional development and training	Instruction by highly qualified professional staff Professional development for teachers and aides, and where appropriate, pupil services personnel, parents, principals, and other staff to support high standards	**CSRD** – Ongoing professional development as a central part of the reform effort **SWP** – When feasible, training for teachers in how to identify and address individual student learning difficulties
Measurable goals and benchmarks: Measurable goals for student performance tied to the State's challenging content and student performance standards and benchmarks for meeting the goals	Annual review and update of schoolwide plan Plan for how the school will determine whether the needs of students in target populations are being met	**CSRD** – Specific benchmarks indicating progress towards student performance goals **SWP** – Measures to ensure that students' difficulties are identified on a timely basis **SWP** – Involvement of teachers in decisions regarding use of assessments
Support within the school: The program is supported by school faculty, administrators, and staff	Involvement of teachers, principals, and other staff in development of schoolwide plan	**CSRD** – Awareness, commitment, and ongoing involvement of teachers, principal, and all staff **SWP** – Inclusion of teachers in decisions regarding use of assessments
Parent and community involvement: Meaningful involvement of parents and the local community in planning and implementing school improvement activities	Strategies to increase parental involvement, such as training for parents on helping students meet standards as appropriate Involvement of parents and the community in development of a schoolwide plan School provides assessment results to parents	**CSRD** – Parents and community involved specifically in school improvement **SWP** – Parent-teacher conferences for any student that is not meeting the standards **SWP** – Family literacy services as one possible strategy
External technical support and assistance: High quality external technical support and assistance from a comprehensive school reform entity with experience or expertise in schoolwide reform and improvement	District and/or other technical assistance providers, such as a state school support team, assists school in developing a schoolwide plan	**CSRD** – External technical support is in addition to the integral role of the district in providing technical assistance

Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Program (CSRD)	Title I Schoolwide Program (SWP)	Special Emphases
Evaluation strategies: Plan for the evaluation of the implementation of school reforms and the student results achieved	Collection and disaggregation of data on student achievement Plan for how the school will determine whether the needs of students in target populations are being met	**CSRD** – Evaluation of implementation and impact **CSRD** – Strong district role in evaluation
Coordination of resources: Coordination and reallocation of resources (funding, staff, time, equipment) to support and sustain the reform effort	Schoolwide plan indicates how Title I and other resources, including funding from other Federal and State programs, will be used to implement the plan	**CSRD** – Emphasis on reallocating resources in order to sustain the reform effort

DETERMINING EFFECTIVENESS – THREE EXAMPLES

The *Continuum of Evidence of Effectiveness* table (below) is included in the Department of Education's Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program guidance, which may be viewed in full at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/ compreform/csrdgui.html>. The table poses illustrative questions that schools and school districts may want to ask when evaluating research-based models. Following the table are examples in which the factors are applied to hypothetical school reform models.

CONTINUUM OF EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

	Most Rigorous	**Somewhat Rigorous**	**Marginal**
Theory/ Research Foundation			
	Does the model explain the theory behind its design, including references to scientific literature, that elucidate why the model improves student achievement?	Does the model state the theory behind its design, explaining how the model's components reinforce one another to improve student achievement?	Does the model explain the theory behind its design?
Evaluation-based Evidence of Effectiveness			
	Have student achievement gains been shown using experimental and control groups created through either large-scale random assignment or carefully matched comparison groups?	Have student achievement gains been shown using between or within-school comparisons?	Have student achievement gains been shown for a single school?
	Has the model produced educationally significant pre- and post-intervention student achievement gains, as reliably measured using appropriate assessments?	Has the model reproduced student achievement gains relative to district means or other comparison groups, using appropriate assessment instruments?	Has the model produced improvements on other indicators of student performance e.g. student attendance, graduation rates, or student engagement?
	Have the student achievement gains been sustained for three or more years?	Have the student achievement gains been sustained for one or two years?	Have other indicators of improved student performance been sustained for one or two years?
	Have the student achievement gains been confirmed through independent, third-party evaluation?	Has a state, district, or school evaluation team evaluated the model?	Have its developers evaluated the model?

Implementation		
Has the model been fully implemented in multiple sites for more than three years?	Has the model been fully implemented in the original site(s) for more than three years?	Has the model been fully implemented in the original pilot site(s) for a minimum of one year?
Is documentation available that clearly specifies the model's implementation requirements and procedures, including staff development, curriculum, instructional methods, materials, assessments, and costs?	Is documentation available that attempts to describe the implementation requirements of the model, including staff development, curriculum, instruction methods, materials, and assessments?	Is documentation available that provides a general description of the program's requirements?
Are the costs of full implementation clearly specified, including whether or not the costs of materials, staff development, additional personnel, etc., are included in the program's purchase price?	Have the costs of full implementation been estimated, including whether or not the costs of materials, staff development, additional personnel, etc., are included in the program's purchase price?	Is documentation available that provides general information about the program's costs?
Has the model been implemented in schools with characteristics similar to the target school: same grade levels, similar size, similar poverty levels, similar student demographics, such as racial, ethnic, and language minority composition?	Has the model been successfully implemented in at least one school with characteristics similar to the target school?	Is information on grade level, size, student demographics, poverty level, and racial, ethnic and language minority concentration available for the schools where the model has been implemented?
Replicability		
Has the model been replicated successfully in a wide range of schools and districts, e.g., urban, rural, suburban?	Has the model been replicated in a number of schools or districts representing diverse settings?	Is full replication of the model being initiated in several schools?
Have the replication sites been evaluated, demonstrating significant student achievement gains comparable to those achieved in the pilot site(s)?	Have some replication sites been evaluated, demonstrating positive gains in student achievement?	Are promising initial results available from the replication sites?

The following examples illustrate how schools can consider effectiveness of research-based models using the *Continuum of Evidence of Effectiveness*. Also see Tools 13 and 14 for ideas on how to evaluate models you are considering for implementation.

EXAMPLE 1

A school is considering a model whose stated purpose is to facilitate the school's development of common goals. The model provides five teachers and the principal with coaching in the principles of school-wide reform. All schools using the model are put in touch with each other. To date, the summary of the research base for the model suggests that a single school that used the model for two years has improved math scores over the last year. No systematic evaluation of the model is currently under way or planned.

Using the Continuum of Effectiveness as a guide, a state, district, or school would probably conclude that the evidence of effectiveness for the model is unacceptably weak. No research

basis or other justification is provided, with the exception of a somewhat vague statement that school staff should work together to be effective. Evidence for the effectiveness of the model is sketchy. The description includes a statement that the model has been implemented in a number of schools, yet there is no analysis of such implementation. The only student achievement results are for one school for a short time in one subject. Nor is any evaluation planned. This model's level of evidence would most likely fall below the acceptable standards of rigor that states, districts, and schools should demand of a research-based comprehensive model of school reform.

Example 2

A school is considering a model that emphasizes a curriculum in reading and mathematics, using specific instructional techniques to guide classroom teaching and learning activities. The model provides teachers with intensive, ongoing staff development using professional facilitators trained by the model's developer. The facilitators remain on site as the model is implemented to ensure all components are being implemented in a coherent way. The program has been fully implemented in approximately 300 schools in 37 districts in nine states. Student achievement is measured both by commercial standardized tests and state assessment systems where appropriate. Local adaptations are available for a predominantly Spanish-speaking community. When matched on socioeconomic characteristics, schools using this model show reading and math scores approximately three-quarters of a standard deviation higher than those of comparison schools. Results are similar for both African-American and Caucasian students. The program has been evaluated by its developer in approximately 12 sites over two years.

Evidence for this model is certainly stronger than in Example 1, but while this model provides some details for each of the four dimensions in the Continuum, the implementation evidence is fairly general. Additional questions that states and schools might ask include:

- What specific instructional materials are included?
- How will teachers learn the principles of instruction?
- For which grades and which types of schools are the achievement gains demonstrated?
- Have any independent, third-party evaluations been done, i.e., ones other than by the developer?

While the developer could likely provide satisfactory answers to most questions, the process would help reveal the particular strengths and weaknesses of this model.

Example 3

A school has been studying how to improve its students' very low scores on the State assessments in reading, math, and other core content areas. The school leadership team, with staff, parents, local university representatives, and community groups, has carefully reviewed its performance data and assessed what needs to be improved, concluding that it needs a comprehensive approach to reform its operations and instructional program.

Participants reviewed both individual academic curricular programs and comprehensive reform models, looking specifically for evidence of effectiveness for these types of programs. In addition, they studied the match between the programs and the State's rigorous academic content standards. They also sought information on program implementation in similar districts. After considerable discussion among school administrators, teachers, parents, community members, and outside experts, the school decided to develop its own comprehensive school reform model, which would include upgrading curriculum and instruction, teacher professional development, school organization, parental involvement activities, and testing.

The school's proposed model is based on the careful integration of distinct, research-based curricula with documented evidence of effectiveness. The intended goal is to implement a

coherent instructional package that will: (1) address state content and performance standards; (2) be aligned with district and state assessment systems; (3) include professional development that helps teachers master the curricula as well as integrate the parts into a unified instructional approach; and (4) include an evaluation strategy so the school can learn what is working and change what is not. As a result, the school has decided on a Title I schoolwide approach so it can combine Federal, state, and other resources for curricula to reform its instructional program and, later, a long-term implementation effort.

Using the Continuum as a guide, this example makes clear that the school has considered the evidence of effectiveness that supports its choice of discrete curricular programs (addressing issues in row two). However, row one (theory/research foundation) suggests that the school needs to be familiar with the theoretical or research foundation for the model it proposes. The school has not yet made clear why it expects its comprehensive model, which combines multiple discrete curricular elements, to function effectively as a whole. Concerning implementation, it is unclear how the school has assessed how the program will work at the classroom level. Thus, answers to the questions in row three (implementation) would be useful. The example indicates that the school sought information on how well selected programs performed in other settings. This shows a sensitivity to the questions raised in row four (replicability).

Checklist for Improvement

(Adapted from: *Turning Around Low-Performing Schools: A Guide for State and Local Leaders*, U.S. Department of Education, May 1998.)

Suggestions for State and Local Leaders

- ❑ Give school officials sufficient authority to act quickly, decisively, and creatively to improve schools—and then hold them accountable for results.
- ❑ Support schools that are working to fundamentally change and improve. Consider instituting a reward system for schools that improve performance. Give them extra resources, support, recognition, and assistance whenever possible.
- ❑ Take extra steps to recruit, support, reward, and train outstanding principals and teachers and send them to schools in difficulty. Use experienced, recognized teachers as mentors to beginning teachers.
- ❑ Provide quick but fair ways to take bold action to address chronically troubled schools. Provide concrete means to convert a school to a new design, reconstitute it, or start it over as a charter school.
- ❑ Establish a state or district-wide data collection system that allows the evaluation of student and school progress across a set of expected standards of performance.
- ❑ Evaluate student performance to make sure that all students are making progress toward high standards of excellence and are given opportunities to succeed. Then end social promotion. At the same time, recognize that school transformation is a steady process and results do not always appear immediately.
- ❑ Give parents the opportunity to choose among public schools and choose the full set of core courses needed for their children to prepare for college and careers.
- ❑ Consider creating a more personalized education setting in high schools by establishing smaller units, such as grade-level or across-grade "families," several charter schools, schools within a school, or career academies.
- ❑ Ensure that no student or group of students is left out of improvement efforts. Disadvantaged students need extra attention to make sure they are receiving the same opportunities as other children. This requires focused, high-quality instruction during the regular school day and extra help and time after school and during the summer.
- ❑ Work with employers, teachers, principals, and religious and community groups to encourage greater family and community involvement in the school, after school, in the community, and at home.
- ❑ If a principal is slow to get the message, find strength in a new leader with experience in similar schools.
- ❑ If teachers are burned out or not engaged in the needed improvements, counsel them to improve or leave the profession. Create mechanisms to allow those who do not agree with the reform to leave.

Suggestions for School Leaders—Principals, Lead Teachers, and Parent Leaders

- ❑ Create an orderly, disciplined environment. Students will do well and teachers will improve their teaching if they are in a safe, supportive culture of learning with firm, fair rules of discipline.

- ❑ Recruit and hire the best teachers and principals. Provide high-quality professional development to keep them at your school and continuously improve their knowledge and skills.

- ❑ Be open to fundamental change. Build a team to put a relentless focus on improving instruction and achieving high academic standards. Go the extra mile--school leaders set the tone for the whole school.

- ❑ Identify needs based on achievement results and group input. Analyze student achievement results at the student and classroom level. Examine the school's budget, looking for what percent is dedicated to improving teaching and learning in the classroom.

- ❑ Search out and visit research-based designs as a guide to choosing reforms. Send teachers to conferences, training, and other schools to consider proven designs. Successful designs or models have been used in schools across the country. A number of these designs can be adapted to your school's needs. The whole school community should agree on the design for your school.

- ❑ Work with top district administrators and staff as well as teachers, parents, and school staff to set concrete goals tied to high standards for student and school achievement. Choose an improvement strategy that targets the student needs revealed by your data analysis. Make the goals real by continuously monitoring progress toward them. If progress is slow or nonexistent, reassess what needs to improve in the school and make the necessary changes.

- ❑ Concentrate professional development on improving teaching. Focus professional development on enhancing teachers' knowledge of their subject matter and their skills for engaging students in learning. Allow teachers to identify professional development needs for the school, and include time for professional development in the regular school schedule; staff development is not an extra-curricular activity.

- ❑ Reach out to parents and family members. Listen to parents' concerns to find out what worries them most for their children. Train teachers and other school staff to work with families. Use new technologies--voice mail systems, homework hot lines, and the Internet--to link parents to the classroom. Make special accommodations to reach parents whose first language is not English. Call 1-800-USA-LEARN for a copy of New Skills for New Schools, a text on how to help teachers involve families in children's learning.

- ❑ Include all staff in the process of change; create a team. School improvements will work only if teachers commit to fundamental change. Everyone--including administrative, custodial, and lunch staff--can help create a positive learning environment. Call a meeting of teachers, administrators, staff, parents, and other partners to establish a focus for improvement.

- ❑ Make collaborative planning time available. Incorporate into the regular schedule time for teachers to plan, discuss, and set goals together.

- ❑ Plan instructional time to meet student needs. Many schools have increased family support and education by offering safe havens for students before and after school, providing learning and enrichment programs for children that build on their regular school program, offering course work and social activities for adults in the evenings and on weekends, and instituting block scheduling. Call 1-800-USA-LEARN for a copy of *Keeping Schools Open as Community Learning Centers*.

- ❑ Develop partnerships with businesses, civic groups, and institutions of higher education. These connections can provide monetary and material resources, volunteer time, and expertise about school reform and education research.

- ❑ Reach out for assistance. Look in the resource directory at the end of this guide for information on resources that can help turn around schools. Contact one of the many experienced organizations that are also listed in this guide. Explore research-based approaches to see if they meet your school's needs. Ask other schools working on reforms nearby for assistance and advice. Bring in a facilitator to help assess your needs and identify academic areas in greatest need of improvement.

- ❑ Learn about charter schools and school reconstitution. Invite successful charter school developers to explain how they got organized and started. Visit the web site devoted to charter schools, <http://www.uscharterschools.org>. Some schools have to start completely over to have a chance at success.

- ❑ Continuously assess progress toward goals by including evaluation in your school improvement plan. This will give positive reinforcement to students, staff, and the community by showing how far the school has come. It will also illuminate areas needing greater attention. Continuous evaluation provides an opportunity for everyone to reflect on the change process and make suggestions about ways to refine and improve it. Call 1-800-USA-LEARN for a copy of A Compact for Learning: An Action Handbook for Family-School-Community Partnerships.

Suggestions for Families, Businesses, and Community Organizations

- ❑ Get involved with the school. Support needed changes and improvements. Make your voice heard. Work with the principal and teachers to make the school the best learning environment for children. If order and discipline need to be instilled, help by reinforcing school rules at home. Volunteer to monitor school halls and playgrounds.

- ❑ Compare your school with similar schools that are successful. There is much to learn from a partnership with schools that are being turned around or have an accelerated rate of improvement.

- ❑ Support your principal and teachers and other staff who are making fundamental changes to turn your school around. Principals and teachers need encouragement from parents and the community to know they are heading in the right direction.

- ❑ Encourage schools to help all children reach high standards for learning. If you see that some children are not being challenged, talk to their teachers, the principal, or the district staff. The curriculum, student assessments, teaching, and homework should all be focused on high academic standards.

- ❑ Instill in children the values they need to progress in school and throughout life. Work to build good character and citizenship skills to help improve school discipline and student achievement. Many children need extra help, tutoring, and mentoring after school and during the summer. Help start and expand after-school programs to provide a safe environment (e.g., bring in and join other community and youth groups).

- ❑ Demonstrate that education is important. If you are a parent, ask to see your child's homework and take an active interest in what he or she is learning at school. If you represent a business, ask to see students' transcripts before you hire them. If you represent a community organization, recognize students who reach high achievement levels and reward teachers and principals who go the extra mile. Develop school-college partnerships to link middle school and high school students with college.

- ❑ Offer professional development opportunities for teachers through summer internships in businesses that focus on their subject matter. Technical firms can offer placement in work that hones teachers' math and science knowledge. Businesses and colleges can help with team building and strategic planning.

- ❑ Become a member of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education. Call 1-800-USA-LEARN for a free information packet on how to join 4,000 family, school, community, cultural, and religious organizations and businesses that are committed to increasing family and community involvement in education.

Contact Information for School Reform Models

Additional Resources for Selecting a Reform Model

CSRDweb.net
WestEd and the Network of Regional Education Laboratories
http://www.csrdweb.net

Catalog of School Reform Models
Northwest Regional Education Laboratory
http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/natspec/catalog

Comprehensive School Reform: Making Good Choices: A Guide for Schools and Districts
North Central Regional Education Laboratory
http://www.ncrel.org/csri/tools/makegood.pdf

Comprehensive School Reform: Criteria and Questions Selecting School Reform Models
Education Commission of the States
http://www.ecs.org/

An Educators Guide to Schoolwide Reform
American Institutes for Research
http://www.aasa.org/Reform

The following list of reform models is based on the information contained in the ***Catalog of School Reform Models*** produced by Northwest Regional Education Laboratory and additional information available through the Internet.

Entire-School Reform Models

Accelerated Schools Project

Accelerated Schools Project (K-8)
Claudette Sprague
National Center for the Accelerated Schools Project, Stanford University
CERAS 109
Stanford, California 94305-3084
Phone: 650-725-1676
Fax: 650-725-6140
E-mail: hf.cys@forsythe.standford.edu
Web site: http://www.stanford.edu/group/ASP/

AMERICA'S

America's Choice School Design (K-12)
National Center on Education and the Economy
700 11th Street N.W., Suite 750
Washington, DC, 20001
Phone: 202-783-3668
Fax: 202-783-3672
E-mail: schooldesign@ncee.org
Web site: http://www.ncee.org/ac/intro.html

ATLAS Communities (preK-12)
Reggie Silberberg
ATLAS Communities
55 Chapel Street
Newton, MA 02158-1060
Phone: 617-969-7100
Fax: 617-969-3440
E-mail: atlas@edc.org
Web site: http://www.edc.org/FSC/ATLAS

Audrey Cohen College: Purpose Centered Education (K-12)
Janith Jordan
Audrey Cohen College
75 Varick Street New York, NY 10013-1919
Phone: 212-343-1234, ext. 3400
Fax: 212-343-8472
E-mail: JanithJ@aol.com
Web site: http://www.audrey-cohen.edu

Center for Effective Schools (K-12)
Dick Tormasi
Phi Delta Kappa International
P.O. Box 789
Bloomington, IN 47402-0789
Phone: 800-766-1156
E-mail:effective.schools@pdkintl.org
Web site: http://www.pdkintl.org
/profdev/nces/nceshome.htm

Child Development Project (K-6)
Denise Wood
Developmental Studies Center
2000 Embarcadero, Suite 305
Oakland, CA 94606-5300
Phone: 800 666-7270
Fax: 510-533-0213
E-mail: Denise_Wood@devstu.org
Web site: http://www.devstu.org

Coalition of Essential Schools (formerly 9-12, now K-12)
Amy Gerstein, Executive Director
Coalition of Essential Schools
1814 Franklin Street, Suite 700
Oakland, CA 94612
Phone: 510-433-1451
Fax: 510-433-1455
E-mail: hortiz@essentialschools.org
Web site: http://www.essentialschools.org

Community for Learning (K-12)
Cynthia Smith
Director of Information Services
Laboratory for Student Success
Temple University Center for Research in
Human Development and Education
1301 Cecil B. Moore Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19122-6091
Phone: 800-892-5550
Fax: 215-204-5130
E-mail: lss@vm.temple.edu
Web site: http://www.temple.edu
/LSS/cfl.htm

Community Learning Centers (PreK-Adult)
David Alley, President
Designs for Learning
1745 University Avenue, Suite 310
St. Paul, MN 55104-3624
Phone: (651) 649-0200
Fax: (651) 649-0240
Email: david@designlearn.com
Web site: http://www.designlearn.com

Co-NECT Schools (K-12)
Tricia Ferry
Co-NECT Schools
70 Fawcett Street
Cambridge, MA 02138
Phone: 617-873-1854
Fax: 617-873-2455
E-mail: Info@co-nect.bbn.com
Web site: http://www.co-nect.com

Core Knowledge (K-8)
Constance Jones
Director of School Programs
Core Knowledge Foundation
801 East High Street
Charlottesville, VA 22902
Phone: 804-977-7550
Fax: 804-977-0021
E-mail: coreknow@coreknowledge.org
Web site: http://www.coreknowledge.org

Different Ways of Knowing (K-7)
Sue Beauregard or Amy Berfield
The Galef Institute
11050 Santa Monica Blvd., 3rd Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90025-3594
Phone: 310-479-8883
Fax: 310-473-9720
E-mail: sue@galef.org or amy@galef.org
Web site: http://www.dwoknet.galef.org/home.html

ADI
Association for Direct Instruction

Direct Instruction (K-6)
Bryan Wickman
Association for Direct Instruction
P.O. Box 10252
Eugene, OR 97440
Phone: 541-485-1293
Fax: 541-683-7543
E-mail: rcdixon@adihome.org
Web site: http://www.adihome.org/

Edison

Edison Project (K-12)
Debra Doorack
The Edison Project
521 Fifth Avenue, 15th Floor
New York, NY 10175
Phone: 212-419-1600
Fax: 212-419-1604
E-mail: vworthingt@newyork.edisonproject.com
Web site: http://www.edisonproject.com

Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound (K-12)
Greg Farrell
Outward Bound USA
100 Mystery Point Road
Garrison, NY 10524
Phone: 914-424-4000
Fax: 914-424-4280
E-mail: farrell@elob.org
Web site: http://www.elob.org/

Foxfire Fund (K-12)
Christy Stevens
Coordinator of Teacher Support Services
Foxfire Fund
P.O. Box 541
Mountain City, GA 30562
Phone: 706-746-5828
Fax: 706-746-5829
E-mail: foxfire@foxfire.org
Web site: http://www.foxfire.org

High Schools That Work (9-12)
Gene Bottoms, Senior Vice President
Southern Regional Education Board
592 10th St. N.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30318-5790
Phone: 404-875-9211
Fax: 404-872-1477
E-mail: gene.bottoms@sreb.org
Web site: http://www.sreb.org/Programs/hstw/high.html

HIGH/SCOPE
Educational Research Foundation

High/Scope Primary Grades Approach to Education (K-3)
Charles Wallgren
High/Scope Educational Research Foundation
600 North River Street
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198-2898
Phone: 734-485-2000
Fax: 734-485-0704
E-mail: info@highscope.org
Web site: http://www.highscope.org

Integrated Thematic Instruction (K-12)
Jane McGeehan, CEO
Susan Kovalik & Associates, Inc.
17051 S.E. 272nd Street, Suite 17
Kent, WA 98042
Phone: 253-631-4400
Fax: 253-631-7500
E-mail: skovalik@oz.net
Web: http://www.kovalik.com

League of Professional Schools (K-12)
Lew Allen
League of Professional Schools
124 Aderhold Hall
University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30602
Phone: 706-542-2516
Fax: 706-542-2502
E-mail: lewallen@arches.uga.edu
Web site: http://www.coe.uga.edu/lps/

MicroSociety® (K-8)
Robert L. Kutzik, Program Director
306 Cherry Street, Suite 200
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: 215-922-4006
Fax: 215-922-3303
E-mail: msocinc@aol.com
Web site: http://www.microsociety.org

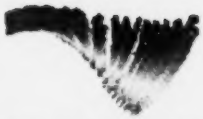
Modern Red Schoolhouse (K-12)
Pam Randall
Modern Red Schoolhouse Institute
208 23rd Avenue, North
Nashville, TN 37203
Phone: 888-175-6774
Fax: 615-320-5366
E-mail: prandall@mrsh.org
Web site: http://www.mrsh.org

Montessori (PreK-8)
David Kahn
Montessori Public School Consortium
and North American Montessori Teachers' Association (NAMTA)
11424 Bellflower Road
Cleveland OH 44106
Phone: 216-421-1905
Fax: 216-421-8193
E-mail: staff@montessori-namta.org
Web site: http://www.montessori-namta.org (NAMTA)
http://www.amshq.org/ (American Montessori Society)
http://www.ami.edu (Association Montessori Internationale)

Onward to Excellence (K-12)
Bob Blum
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
School Improvement Program
101 SW Main Street, Suite 500
Portland, Oregon 97204
Phone: 503-275-9615
Fax: 503-275-9621
E-mail: blumb@nwrel.org
Web site: http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/ote

Paideia (K-12)
Terry Roberts
National Paideia Center
School of Education CB #8045
University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-8045
Phone: 919-962-7379
Fax: 919-962-7381
E-mail: npc@unc.edu
Web site: http://www.unc.edu/paideia/

QuEST (K-12)
Diane Rivers, President
Educational Concepts
3474 Alaiedon Parkway, Suite 600
Okemos, MI 48864
Phone: 517-381-0917
Fax: 517-381-0141
E-mail: sdrivers@aol.com
Web site: http://www.ec-quest.com



Roots & Wings (PreK-6)
Success for All Foundation
200 West Towsontown Blvd
Baltimore, MD 21204-5200
Phone: 800-548-4998
Fax: 410-324-4444
E-mail: sfa@successforall.net
Web web: http://www.successforall.net

School Development Program (K-12)
Joanne Corbin
School Development Program
55 College Street
New Haven, CT 06510
Phone: 203-737-1020
Fax: 203-737-1023
E-mail: joanne.corbin@yale.edu
Web site: http://info.med.yale.edu/comer

Success for All (PreK-6)
Success for All Foundation
200 West Towsontown Blvd
Baltimore, MD 21204-5200
Phone: 800-548-4998
Fax: 410-324-4444
E-mail: sfa@successforall.net
Web site: http://www.successforall.net

Talent Development High School with Career Academies (9-12)
James M. McPartland, Co-director
Talent Development High School Program
Center for Students Placed At Risk
Johns Hopkins University
3003 North Charles Street, Suite 200
Baltimore, MD 21218
Phone: 410-516-8800
Fax: 410-516-8890
E-mail: jmcpartlan@csos.jhu.edu
Web site: http://scov.csos.jhu.edu
/talent/talent.html

URBAN LEARNING CENTERS

Urban Learning Centers (PreK-12)
Greta Pruitt
Urban Learning Centers
315 West 9th Street, Suite 1110
Los Angeles, CA 90015
Phone: 213-622-5237
Fax: 213-629-5288
E-mail: ulc@lalc.k12.ca.us
Web site: http://homer.lalc.k12.ca.us/ulc/

Ventures Initiative and Focus® System (K-12)
Maxine E. Bleich, President
Ventures Education Systems Corporation
245 Fifth Avenue, Suite 802
New York, NY 10016
Phone: 212-696-5717
Fax: 212-696-5726
E-mail: mbleich@ventures.org

SKILL- AND CONTENT-BASED REFORM MODELS: READING/LANGUAGE ARTS

Breakthrough to Literacy (K-2)
Henry Layne
The Wright Group
19201 120th Avenue NE
Bothell, WA 98011
Phone: 800-523-2371, ext. 3433
Fax: 425-486-7704

Carbo Reading Styles Program (K-8)
Marian S. Gordon
National Reading Styles Institute
P.O. Box 737
Syosset, NY 11791
Phone: 800-331-3117
Fax: 516-921-5591
E-mail: info@nrsi.com
Web site: http://www.nrsi.com

Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (2-8)
Dorothy Sauer
CIRC Program
Center for Social Organization of Schools
3003 North Charles Street
Baltimore MD 21218
Phone: 800-548-4998
Fax: 410-516-6671
Web site: http://www.successforall.net/overviewcirc.html

First Steps (K-10)
Kim McIntyre
First Steps
361 Hanover Street
Portsmouth, NH 03801-3912
Phone: 800-541-2086 ext. 164
Fax: 800-354-2004
E-mail: firststeps@heinemann.com
Web: http://www.heinemann.com/firststeps/index.html

THE GREAT BOOKS FOUNDATION

Junior Great Books (K-12)
Deborah Mantia
Director of Program Development
The Great Books Foundation
35 East Wacker Drive, Suite 2300
Chicago, IL 60601
Phone: 800-222-5870
Fax: 312-407-0334
E-mail: mantia@gbf.mhs.compuserve.com
Web site: http://www.greatbooks.org/junior/

The National Writing Project

National Writing Project (K-16)
Richard Sterling, Executive Director
National Writing Project
University of California
5511 Tolman Hall, #1670
Berkeley, CA 94720-1670
Phone: 510-642-0963
Fax: 510-642-4545
E-mail: nwp@socrates.berkeley.edu
Web site: http://www-gse.berkeley.edu/Research/NWP/nwp.html

Reading Recovery (1)
Jean F. Bussell, Executive Director
Reading Recovery Council of North America
1929 Kenny Road, Suite 100
Columbus, OH 43210-1069
Phone: 614-292-7111
Fax: 614-292-4404
E-mail: reeves.8@osu.edu
Web site: http://www.readingrecovery.org/

Strategic Teaching and Reading Project (K-12)
Marianne Kroeger
North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL)
1900 Spring Road, Suite 300
Oak Brook, IL 60523-1480
Phone: 800-356-2735 or 630-571-4700
Fax: 630- 218-1041
E-mail: kroeger@ncrel.org
Web site: http://www.ncrel.org/strp/Strp.htm

SKILL- AND CONTENT-BASED REFORM MODELS: MATHEMATICS

Comprehensive School Mathematics Program (K-6)
Clare Heidema
McREL – CSMP
2550 South Parker Road, Suite 500
Aurora, Colorado 80014
Phone: 303-337-0990
Fax: 303-337-3005
E-mail: cheidema@mcrel.org
Web site: http://www.mcrel.org/products/csmp

Connected Mathematics Project (6-8)
Elizabeth Phillips
Connected Mathematics Project
A715 Wells Hall
Michigan State University
East Lansing, MI 48824
Phone: 517-432-2870
Fax: 517-432-2872
E-mail: cmp@math.msu.edu
Web site: http://www.mth.msu.edu/cmp

Core Plus Mathematics Project (9-12)
Marcia Weller Weinhold
Outreach Coordinator
Core-Plus Mathematics Project
4408 Everett Tower
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, MI 49008
Phone: 616-387-4562
Fax: 616-387-4546
E-mail: cpmp@wmich.edu
Web site: http://www.wmich.edu/cpmp/

Interactive Mathematics Program (9-12)
Janice Bussey, IMP Outreach Coordinator
Interactive Mathematics Program
P.O. Box 2891
Sausalito, CA 94966
Phone: 888-628-4467 or 415-332-3328
Fax: (415) 332-3381
E-mail: imp@math.sfsu.edu
Web site: http://www.mathimp.org/

MATH Connections: A Secondary Mathematics Core Curriculum™ (9-12)
June G. Ellis
Math Connections Implementation Center
750 Old Main Street, Suite 303
Rocky Hill, CT 06067-1567
Phone: (860) 721-7010
Fax: (860) 721-7026
E-mail: jellis@mathconnections.com
Web site: www.mathconnections.com

University of Chicago School Mathematics Project (K-12)
Carol Siegel
UCSMP, University of Chicago
5835 South Kimbark
Chicago, IL 60637
Phone: 773-702-1130
Fax: 773-702-0248
E-mail: ucsmp@uchicago.edu
Web site: http://www.uchicago.edu/ssd/ucsmp/index.html

SKILL- AND CONTENT-BASED REFORM MODELS: SCIENCE

Developmental Approaches in Science, Health and Technology (K-6)
Curriculum Research Development Group
University of Hawai'i
1776 University Avenue
Honolulu, HI 96822
Phone: (800) 799-8111 or (808) 956-6918
Fax: (808) 956-4933
E-mail: crdg@hawaii.edu
Web site: http://www2.hawaii.edu/crdg/science/dash/dash.html

GALAXY Classroom Science (K-5)
Bill Schmitt
EMG GALAXY Classroom
6710 East Camelback Road
Scottsdale, AZ 85251
Phone: 800-303-9070, ext. 1
Fax: 602-481-6484
E-mail: marci.schwenn@emg.com
Web site: http://www.galaxy.org/

Foundational Approaches in Science Teaching (Middle School)
Curriculum Research and Development Group
University of Hawai'i
1776 University Avenue
Honolulu, HI 96822
Phone: (800) 799-8111 or (808) 956-6918
Fax: (808) 956-4933
E-mail: crdg@hawaii.edu
Web site: http://www2.hawaii.edu/crdg/science/fast/FAST.html

SKILL- AND CONTENT-BASED REFORM MODELS: OTHER

ACCESS (PreK-1)
Mary A. Felleisen
Primak Educational Foundation
PO Box 701
Devon, PA 19333
Phone: 800-444-5729
Fax: 610-644-6789

Sopris West
"Helping You Meet the Needs of At-Risk Students"

Basic Skill Builders (K-6)
Ray Beck, Project Director
Basic Skill Builders Project
Sopris West
4093 Specialty Place
Longmont, CO 80504
Phone: 800-547-6747 or 303-651-2829
Fax: 303-776-5934
E-mail: raybeck@sopriswest.com
Web site: http://www.sopriswest.com

COMP

COMP: Creating Conditions for Learning (K-12)
Linda Marini, Program Manager
COMP: Creating Conditions for Learning
Box 541 Peabody College
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, TN 37203
Phone: 615-322-8050
Fax: 615-343-6148
E-mail: linda.m.marini@vanderbilt.edu
Web: http://comp.peabody.vanderbilt.edu

Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment (4-12)
Linda Fuller, Manager, Special Projects
SkyLight Training and Publishing
2626 Clearbrook Drive
Arlington Heights, IL 60005
Phone: 800-348-4474 or 847-290-6622
Fax: 847-290-7422
E-mail: info@skylightedu.com
Web site: http://www.skylightedu.com

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

HOSTS

HOSTS (Help One Student To Succeed) (K–12)
Chad Woolery, CEO
HOSTS Corporation
1349 Empire Central Drive, Suite 520
Dallas, Texas 75247
Phone: 214-905-1308
Fax: 214-905-1176
Email: info@hostscorp.com
Web site: http://www.hostscorp.com

HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills, 4-8)
Laurie Dagostino, Director
HOTS Dissemination
Education Innovations
2302 E. Speedway, Suite 114
Tucson, AZ 85733
Phone: 520-795-2143
Fax: 520-795-8837
E-mail: info@hots.org
Web site: http://www.hots.org

LIGHTSPAN

Lightspan (K-6)
Jim Marshall, Director Program Evaluation
The Lightspan Partnership
10140 Campus Point Drive
San Diego, CA 92121-1520
Phone: 800-4 ALL KIDS or 619-824-8001
Fax: 619-824-8001
E-mail: jmarshall@lightspan.com
Web site: http://www.lightspan.com

Positive Action® Program

Positive Action (K-12)
Carol Gerber Allred, President/Developer
Positive Action Company
321 Eastland Drive
Twin Falls, ID 83301
Phone: 800-345-2974 or 208-733-1328
Fax: 208-733-1590
E-mail: paction@micron.net
Web site: http://www.posaction.com

Responsive Classroom® (K-8)
Chip Wood, Director
Consulting Teachers Division
Northeast Foundation for Children
71 Montague City Road
Greenfield, MA 01301
Phone: 800-360-6332
Fax: 413-772-2097
E-mail: info@responsiveclassroom.org
Web site: www.responsiveclassroom.org

COMPUTER CURRICULUM CORPORATION
A Pearson Education Company

Success-in-the-Making (K-9)
Computer Curriculum Corporation
Corporate Headquarters
1287 Lawrence Station Road
Sunnyvale, CA 94089
Phone: 888-222-4543, Ext. 6256
Fax: 408-745-0285
Web site: http://www.ccclearn.com/solutions/studachiev/succ_inmak.html

Contact Information for Technical Assistance Providers

Comprehensive Regional Assistance Centers

The Comprehensive Assistance Centers support and assist states, districts, and schools in meeting the needs of children served under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Priority for services is given to high poverty schools and districts, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools, and ESEA recipients implementing schoolwide or Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration programs. The Centers are guided by one overriding aim: to ensure that students served under ESEA programs meet the same high content and performance standards expected of all students, as defined by states. For an overview of all of the Centers, visit their web site: http://www.ccnetwork.org/.

Region I (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT)
Educational Development Center
55 Chapel Street
Newton, MA 02158-1060
Director: Dr. Wende Allen
Phone: (800) 332-0226
Fax: (617) 969-6325
Web site: http://www.edc.org/NECAC

Region II (NY)
The Metropolitan Center for Urban Education
New York University
82 Washington Square East, Suite 72
New York, NY 10003
Director: Dr. LaMar P. Miller
Phone: (800) 469-8224 or (212) 998-5100
Fax: (212) 995-4199
Web site: http://www.nyu.edu/education/metrocenter/nytac/nytac.html

Region III (DC, DE, MD, NJ, OH, PA)
George Washington University
Center for Equity and Excellence in Education
1730 North Lynn Street, Suite 401
Arlington, VA 22209
Director: Dr. Charlene Rivera
Phone: (800) 925-3223 or (703) 528-3588
Fax: (703) 528-5973
Web site: http://r3cc.ceee.gwu.edu/

Region IV (KY, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)
Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc.
1700 North Moore Street, Suite 1275
Arlington, VA 22209
Director: Dr. Pamela K. Buckley
Phone: (800) 624-9120 or (703) 276-0200
Fax: (703) 276-0266
Web site: http://www.ael.org/cac/

Region V (AL, AK, GA, LA, MS)
Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
3330 Causeway Boulevard, Suite 430
Metairie, LA 70002
Director: David Rainey
Phone: (800) 644-8671 or (504) 838-6861
Fax: (504) 831-5242
Web site: http://www.sedl.org/secac/

Region VI (IA, MI, MN, ND, SD, WI)
University of Wisconsin
1025 West Johnson Street, #770
Madison, WI 53706
Director: Dr. Walter Secada
Phone: (888) 862-7763 or (608) 263-4220
Fax: (608) 263-3733
Web site: http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/ccvi

Region VII (IL, IN, KS, MO, NE, OK)
University of Oklahoma
College of Continuing Education
Public and Community Services
555 Constitution Street, Suite 128
Norman, OK 73072-7820
Director: Dr. Belinda Biscoe
Phone: (800) 228-1766 or (405) 325-1729
Fax: (405) 325-1824
Web site: http://region7.ou.edu/index.html

Region VIII (TX)
Intercultural Development Center Research Association (IDRA)
STAR Center
5835 Callaghan Road, Suite 350
San Antonio, TX 78228-1190
Director: Dr. Albert Cortez
Phone: 1-888-FYI-STAR or (210) 684-8180
Fax: (210) 684-5389
Web site: http://www.starcenter.org/

Region IX (AZ, CO, NV, NM, UT)
New Mexico Highlands University
1700 Grande Court, NW, Suite B
Rio Rancho, NM 87124
Director: Dr. Paul E. Martinez
Phone: (505) 891-6111
Fax: (505) 891-5744
Web site: http://www.cesdp.nmhu.edu/swcc/index.html

Region X (ID, MT, OR, WA, WY)
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
101 SW Main Street, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204
Director: Dr. Kim Yap
Phone: (503) 275-9587
Fax: (503) 275-9625
Web site: http://ww.nwrac.org

Region XI (All California counties except Imperial, Inyo, Los Angeles, Mono Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego)
WestEd
730 Harrison Street
San Francisco, CA 94107-1242
Director: Dr. Fred Tempes
Phone: (800) 645-3276 or (415) 565-3000
Fax: (415) 565-3012
Web site: http://www.wested.org/cc

Region XII (Southern California counties: Imperial, Inyo, Los Angeles, Mono, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego)
Los Angeles County Office of Education
9300 Imperial Highway
Downey, CA 90242-2890
Director: Dr. Henry Mothner
Phone: (562) 922-6343
Fax: (562) 940-1798
Web site: http://sccac.lacoe.edu

Region XIII (AK)
South East Regional Resource Center
210 Ferry Way, Suite 200
Juneau, AK 99801
Director: Ms. JoAnn Henderson
Phone: (907) 586-6806
Fax: (907) 463-3811
Web site: http://www.AKRAC.k12.ak.us

Region XIV (FL, PR, VI)
Educational Testing Service
1000 North Ashley Drive, Suite 312
Tampa, FL 33602
Director: Dr. Trudy Hensley
Phone: (800) 756-9003
Fax: (813) 228-0632
Web site: http://www.ets.org/ccxiv

Region XV (HI and American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau)
Pacific Resources for Education and Learning
Ali'i Place 25th Floor
1099 Alakea Street
Honolulu, HI 96813-4321
Director: Ms. Hilda C. Heine
Phone: (808) 441-1300
Fax: (808) 441-1385
Web site: http://www.prel.org/programs/Pc/pacific-center.html

Regional Educational Laboratories

The network of 10 Regional Educational Laboratories, serving geographic regions that span the nation, works to ensure that those involved in educational improvement at the local, state, and regional levels have access to the best available information from research and practice. With support from the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), the Laboratories work as vital partners with state and local educators, community members, and policymakers in using research to tackle the difficult issues of education reform and improvement. For an overview of all of the Laboratories, visit their web site: http://www.relnetwork.org/.

Appalachian Region (KY, TN, VA, WV)
Appalachia Educational Laboratory
1031 Quarrier Street, PO Box 1348
Charleston, WV 25325-1348
Director: Dr. Allen Arnold
Phone: (304) 347-0400
Fax: (304) 347-0487
Web site: http://www.ael.org
Specialty Area: Rural Education

Central Region (CO, KS, MO, NE, ND, SD, WY)
Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory
2550 South Parker Road, Suite 500
Aurora, CO 80014-1678
Director: Dr. J. Timothy Waters
Phone: (303) 337-0990
Fax: (303) 337-3005
Web site: http://www.mcrel.org
Specialty Area: Curriculum, Learning and Instruction

Mid-Atlantic Region (DC, DE, MD, NJ, PA)
Laboratory for Student Success
Center for Research in Human Development and Education
933 Ritter Annex, 13th Street & Cecil B. Moore Ave
Philadelphia, PA 19122-6091
Director: Dr. Margaret C. Wang
Phone: (215) 204-3030
Fax: (215) 204-5130
Web site: http://www.temple.edu/departments/LSS/
Specialty area: Urban Education

Midwestern Region (IA, IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI)
North Central Regional Educational Laboratory
1900 Spring Road, Suite 300
Oak Brook, IL 60523-1480
Director: Dr. Gina Burkhardt
Phone: (630) 571-4700
Fax: (630) 571-4716
Web site: http://www.ncrel.org
Specialty area: Educational Technology

Northeastern Region (CT, MA, ME, NH, NY, PR, RI, VI, VT)
Northeast & Islands Laboratory at Brown University
222 Richmond Street, Suite 300
Providence, RI 02903-4226
Director: Dr. Phil Zarlengo
Phone: (401) 274-9548
Fax: (401) 421-7650
Web site: http://www.lab.brown.edu/
Specialty area: Language and Cultural Diversity

Northwestern Region (AK, ID, MT, OR, WA)
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
101 SW Main Street, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204-3297
Director: Dr. Ethel Simon-McWilliams
Phone: (503) 275-9500
Fax: (503) 275-0448
Web site: http://www.nwrel.org
Specialty area: School Change Process

Pacific Region (HI and American Samoa, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau)
Pacific Region Educational Laboratory
1099 Alakea Street, 25th Floor
Honolulu, HI 96813-4513
Director: Dr. John W. Kofel
Phone: (808) 441-1300
Fax: (808) 441-1385
Web site: http://www.prel.org
Specialty area: Language and Cultural Diversity

Southeastern Region (AL, FL, GA, MS, NC, SC)
Southeastern Regional Vision for Education
P.O. Box 5367
Greensboro, NC 27435
Director: Dr. John R. Sanders
Phone: (910) 334-3211
Fax: (910) 334-3268
Web site: http://www.serve.org
Specialty area: Early Childhood Education

Southwestern Region (AR, LA, NM, OK, TX)
Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
211 East Seventh Street
Austin, TX 78701-3281
Director: Dr. Wesley A. Hoover
Phone: (512) 476-6861
Fax: (512) 476-2286
Web site: http://www.sedl.org
Specialty area: Language and Cultural Diversity

Western Region (AZ, CA, NV, UT)
WestEd
730 Harrison Street
San Francisco, CA 94107-1242
Director: Dr. Glen Harvey
Phone: (415) 565-3000
Fax: (415) 565-3012
Web site: http://www.wested.org
Specialty Area: Assessment and Accountability

Equity Assistance Centers

There are 10 Equity Assistance Centers (EAC) funded by the U.S. Department of Education under Title IV of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. They provide assistance in the areas of race, gender, and national origin equity to public school districts to promote equal educational opportunities. For complete information about each center, visit the EAC's web site: http://mdac.educ.ksu.edu/MDAC/agencies/dac/dac.html.

Regional Technology in Education Consortia (R*TEC)

The Regional Technology in Education Consortia (R*TEC) program is established to help states, local educational agencies, teachers, school library and media personnel, administrators, and other education entities successfully integrate technologies into kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) classrooms, library media centers, and other educational settings, including adult literacy centers. The R*TECs: establish and conduct professional development, technical assistance, and information resource dissemination to promote the effective use of technology in education. They place special emphasis on meeting the documented needs of educators and learners in the region they serve; and fostering regional cooperation and resource sharing. For complete information about each R*TEC, visit their web site: http://www.rtec.org/.

Eisenhower National Clearinghouse for Mathematics and Science Education

The Eisenhower National Clearinghouse for Mathematics and Science Education is a national repository of current mathematics and science resources available to educators, students, parents, and others. Visit their web site: http://www.enc.org.

Eisenhower Regional Mathematics and Science Education Consortia

The Eisenhower Regional Consortia are part of Eisenhower National Clearinghouse's (ENC) national network to improve math and science education. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the Consortia were created to provide technical assistance and professional development opportunities on topics important to their regions and the nation. For complete information about ENC, visit their web site: http://www.enc.org/about/consort/index.htm.

Educational Resources Information Center

The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement, is a nationwide information network that produces a variety of publications and provides extensive user assistance, including AskERIC, an electronic question answering service on the Internet for teachers. The ERIC system includes 16 subject-specific Clearinghouses, the ERIC Processing and Reference facility, and ACCESS ERIC, which provides introductory services. ERIC Clearinghouses address topics such as assessment and evaluation, reading and math, urban and rural education, and teaching and teacher education. For complete information about the ERIC system and the Clearinghouses, visit their web site: http://www.ed.gov/EdRes/EdFed/ERIC.html.

Federal Resource Center for Special Education

The Federal Resource Center for Special Education supports a nationwide special education technical assistance network funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. It plans national meetings of education professionals, provides a national perspective for establishing technical assistance activities across regions by identifying emerging issues and trends in special education, and assists in linking Regional Resource Centers with each other and with other technical assistance providers. For complete information about the Federal Resource Center, visit their web site: http://www.dssc.org/frc.

Regional Resource Centers

There are six Regional Resource Centers specifically funded to assist state education agencies in the systemic improvement of education programs, practices, and policies that affect children and youth with disabilities. The Regional Resource Centers help states and U.S. jurisdictions find integrated solutions, offering consultation, information services, technical assistance, training, and product development. The beneficiaries of the Regional Resource Centers' work are children and youth with disabilities, and the families and professionals who are associated with them. The Regional Centers provide customized products, information, and services that address a wide range of topics. For complete information about the Centers, visit their web site: http://www.dssc.org/frc/rrfc.htm.

National Research and Development Centers

To address nationally significant problems and issues in education, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement, through its five National Institutes, supports university-based national educational research and development centers. The Centers address specific topics such as early childhood development and learning, student learning and achievement, cultural and linguistic diversity and second language learning, and postsecondary improvement. In addition, each Center has collaborating partners, and many work with elementary and secondary schools. Centers may be contacted directly for a catalog of their publications and services. For complete information about the Centers, visit their web site: http://oeri2.ed.gov/offices/OERI/ResCtr.html.

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